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RIDION THEOLOGICUM

ANTI-ROMANUM.

TRACTS

ON

THE POINTS AT ISSUE

BETWEEN

THE CHURCHES

OF

ENGLAND AND ROME.

MISCELLANEOUS TRACTS.

OXFORD,
AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS.
MDCCCXXXVII.



PREFACE.

THIS third volume of Tracts on the points at issue between the Churches of England and Rome, consists of a selection from the smaller publications which appeared in and about the year 1686, in a controversy which seems to have been conducted on both sides with great ability. Of the writers on the Protestant side, Bishop Burnet[a] expresses himself in the following manner: "They set themselves to study the points of controversy. And upon that there followed a great variety of small books, that were easily purchased and soon read. They examined all the points of popery with a solidity of judgment, a clearness of arguing, a depth of learning, and a vivacity of writing, far beyond any thing that had before that time appeared in our language." And again, "The persons who both managed and directed this controversial war were chiefly Tillotson, Stillingfleet, Tennison, and Patrick. Next them were Sherlock, Williams, Clagett, Gee, Aldrich, Atterbury, Whitby, Hooper, and above all these Wake, who having been long in France, chaplain to the lord Preston, brought over with him many curious discoveries, that were both useful and surprising."

The Tracts included in this selection are the following:

I. A Discourse on the Opposition of the Doctrine, Worship, and Practice of the Roman Church, to the Nature, Designs, and Characters of the Christian Faith: by Gilbert Burnet, D. D. Bishop of Salisbury ..... P. 1

[a] Own Times, vol. 3. p. 104. ed. Ox. 1833.

II. A Discourse concerning the Devotions of the Church of Rome: by William Stanley, D. D. Dean of St. Asaph[b] 69

III. The Hazard of being saved in the Church of Rome: by John Tillotson, D. D. Archbishop of Canterbury 121

IV. The Protestant Resolved: by Clement Ellys, M. A.: Rector of Kirkby, in the county of Nottingham[c] ... 139

V. A Discourse concerning a Judge of Controversies in Matters of Religion: by William Sherlock, D. D. Dean of St. Paul's 208

VI. A Discourse about Tradition: by Simon Patrick, D. D. Bishop of Ely 273

VII. The Sacrifice of the Mass: by William Payne, D. D. Prebendary of Westminster[d] 311

VIII. A Discourse concerning the Worship of the Virgin and the Saints: by William Clagett, D. D. Preacher at Grey's Inn[e] 367

IX. The Texts examined concerning Seven Sacraments: by Edward Gee, D. D. Prebendary of Westminster[f]. 460

X. A Discourse of Purgatory: by William Wake, D. D. Archbishop of Canterbury 496

XI. A Discourse of Prayers for the Dead: by the same. 532

XII. The Council of Trent examined and disproved by Catholic Tradition: by Edward Stillingfleet, D. D. Bishop of Worcester 555

XIII. The Difference between the Church of England and the Church of Rome: by John Williams, D. D. Bishop of Chichester[g] 633

XIV. The Difference of the Case between the Separation of Protestants from the Church of Rome, and the Separation of Dissenters from the Church of England: by Dr. Clagett 697

[b] Newcourt's Repertorium, vol. 1. pp. 64. and 129: and Le Neve's Fasti, pp. 24. and 128.

[c] Athenæ Oxon. v. 4. col. 516.

[d] Newcourt's Repertorium, v. 1. p. 700: Le Neve's Fasti, p. 374.

[e] Pref. to Dr. C.'s Sermons: Biog. Britan.

[f] Athenæ Oxon. v. 2. col. 78: Newcourt, v. 1. p. 203: Le Neve, p. 374.

[g] Athenæ Oxon. v. 4. col. 769: Newcourt, v. 1. pp. 208 and 503.

The Tracts are reprinted without alteration, except in two cases; some sentences, which in the present day would be considered of an objectionable nature, having been omitted in the first, and the seventh having been curtailed. They may all however be found in the large collection of Tracts against popery, published in three folio volumes in the year 1748, under the superintendance of Bishop Gibson.

E. C.

St. Alban's Hall,
June 1, 1837.

MISCELLANEOUS TRACTS.

A DISCOURSE

WHEREIN IS HELD FORTH

THE OPPOSITION OF THE DOCTRINE, WORSHIP, AND PRACTICE

OF THE

ROMAN CHURCH,

TO

THE NATURE, DESIGNS, AND CHARACTERS

OF

THE CHRISTIAN FAITH.

He that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow, is an observation which holdeth true of no part of knowledge so much as of the knowledge of mankind. It is some relief to him who knows nothing of foreign wickedness, to hope there are other nations wherein virtue is honoured, and religion is in esteem; which allays his regrets, when he sees vice and impiety abound in his own country: but if by travelling or reading, he enlarge his horizon, and know mankind better, his regrets will grow, when he finds the whole world lies in wickedness. It argues a cruel and inhuman temper to delight in beholding scenes of horror and misery; and certainly none, who either honours his Maker and Redeemer, or is a lover of mankind, can without sorrow look on and see the indignities done to God and his Son Christ, and see the enemy of the human race triumphing over the world with such absolute authority, and so much enraged cruelty; and that not only in the dark region of it, which the Sun of Righteousness hath not yet visited with his gospel, but that where Christ should have a throne Satan's seat should also be, is justly surprising and astonishing. That almost all Christendom hath fallen from their first love, is what

none, whose eyes are open, can deny; and it is little less evident, that the greater part of it hath made shipwreck, and erred from the faith; and that the church, whose *faith was once spoken of throughout the world*, is now become the *mother of the fornications of the earth*. It is true, the scriptures warned us of a *falling away*, of a *mystery of iniquity*, of an *Antichrist to be revealed in due time*, and of a *Babylonish Rome, which should bewitch the earth with her sorceries*, but should be varnished over with fair colours and specious pretences, so that *mystery* should be on her forehead. Being then warned of so much danger to the Christian religion, it is a necessary (though painful) inquiry to see if this Antichrist be yet come, or if we must look for another.

But because some have stretched the notion of Antichristianism so far, that things harmless and innocent come within its compass; and others have so much contracted it, that they might scape free; we are to take a view of the nature and designs of the Christian religion, and to conclude from that what must be Antichristianism: it being not only a bare contradiction to some branches or parts of the gospel, (for then every error or heresy were Antichristianism.) but a design and entire complex of such opinions and practices as are contradictory to and subversive of the power and life of Christianity: and if we find any such thing to be broached and received into the world, we may, with the least hazard of uncharitableness, pronounce it to be Antichristianism; and if it be acted or animated by any head, he may be concluded Antichrist.

The designs of the Christian religion run betwixt these four heads: The first is, to give us right apprehensions of the nature and attributes of God, that we may conceive aright of him, and adore him suitably to his nature and according to his will, and thereby be admitted to a free converse with him, and become partakers of the Divine nature. How little of God was known by the twinklings of nature's light, even to the better and wiser part of the world, Tully's books of the nature of the gods do sufficiently inform us. But if the philosophers were so much to seek in it, what shall we expect from the vulgar? And indeed Homer's Iliad and Ovid's Metamorphoses were wretched systems of divinity; and yet such, and such like, were the sentiments of the nations about

the Godhead. It is true, the seed of Abraham were delivered from that darkness, and knew God by his name Jehovah, and had laws and ordinances given them by God; yet their worship was so carnal, and did so strike upon and affect the senses, that we will be soon satisfied it was not so sublime and free as became the spirituality of the Divine nature, and so was only fitted for the infancy of the people of God; but by Christ *the mystery that lay hid from ages and generations was revealed; for he declared the Father, and revealed him*, and taught us to *renounce idols and vanities, and to serve the living God, commanding all men every where to repent, the times of ignorance, wherein God winked at idolatry, being then over;* that so mankind, being *God's offspring, might feel after him*, and not worship him any more in the blinding grossness of idolatry, but in a pure spiritual manner; and whereas *the law came by Moses, by Christ came grace and truth;* grace in opposition to the severity of the law; and truth, as opposed, not to falsehood, but to the figures and shadows of Moses his law; and therefore God is to be worshipped in spirit and truth, in opposition to the carnal ordinances and typical rites, which shadowed out the truth in the law.

The second branch of the Christian religion is, to hold forth the method of man's reconciliation with his Maker. For the sense of all mankind agrees in this; that sin is an indignity done God, which deserveth punishment, and cannot be expiated by any service man can do: it was therefore necessary there should be a mean found for encouraging sinners to embrace a religious life; of which all had reason to despair, without pardon were offered to penitents, upon the change of their lives. Now this was what the heathen could not dream how to procure. It is true, the Jews had sacrifices for expiating of sin, but these could never quiet their consciences, since the common sense of mankind tells that the blood of beasts cannot appease God. The mystery therefore of the reconciliation of sinners to God is the proper character of the Christian religion; which holds forth to us how the eternal Word was made man, and endured unspeakable sufferings for the sins of men, even to the death of the cross; and was raised up by God, and carried to heaven, where he is vested with all power and authority; and by the merits of his death hath a right to

grant pardon, give grace, and confer eternal life on all that believe on him; by whom God conveys all things to us, and through whom we are to offer up all our worship to God, he being the *Mediator betwixt God and man.*

The third head of the Christian religion is, to teach the perfectest, clearest, and most Divine rules, for advancing of the souls of men to the highest perfection of their natures. It is true, noble pieces of morality were acknowledged and taught by the heathen philosophers; and the books of the Old Testament have the doctrine of virtue, purity, humility, and meekness laid open very fully; but without derogating from these, it must be acknowledged, that as the doctrine of Christianity teacheth all these precepts with clearer rules and fuller directions, so they were in it recommended by the example of its author, backed with the strongest motives, and enforced with the greatest arguments. In these are the lessons of purity, chastity, ingenuity, humility, meekness, patience, and generosity, so clearly laid down, and so fully evinced, that no man, who is so much a man as to love those things whereby his mind may be improved to all that is truly great and noble, but must be enamoured of the Christian religion, as soon as he is taught it.

The fourth design of religion is, to unite mankind in the closest bonds of peace, friendship, and charity, which it doth not only by the rules prescribed for the tempering our passions, forgiving of injuries, and loving our enemies, and by the doctrine of obedience to those in authority over us; but likewise by associating us into one body, called *the church;* wherein we are to worship God jointly, and to be coupled in one by the use of the sacraments, which are the ligaments of this body.

Having thus viewed the great designs of the Christian religion in the several branches and parts thereof, I shall add to this the main distinguishing characters of our religion, which are also four.

The first is, its verity; that it is not founded on the tattles of persons concerned, nor on the reveries of dotards, nor received with a blind credulity, being founded on the authority of the great God, which appeared visibly in those that published it, chiefly in the person of Jesus Christ, who by his

miracles that were wrought in sight of all the people, even his enemies looking on, and not being able to deny them, but chiefly by his resurrection from the dead, was declared to be the Son of God, which was seen and known by many, who followed not cunningly devised fables, but were the eyewitnesses of his majesty, who went in his name, and published it to the world, confirming it by miracles and mighty wonders, attesting it notwithstanding all the persecutions they met with, most of them confirming it with their blood: and this doctrine was received and believed by the better part of mankind, though it being contrary to all the interests of the flesh, whose mortification it teacheth, its reception cannot be imputed to credulity or interest.

The second character of our religion is, its genuine simplicity and perspicuity, that all its doctrines and rules are clearly and distinctly held out to us, not like the heathen divinity, much whereof lay in dark oracles in the books of the Sibyls, and in other pretended mysteries, which none but the priests might handle and expound. The Jewish religion was also veiled with types and figures, so that it was not easy to see the substance and truth through all these foldings and shadows. But the glory of the Christian religion, as to this particular, is nobly laid out by St. Paul, in these words, 2 Cor. iii. 18. *But we all, with open face as in a glass beholding the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord.*

The third character is, the reasonableness of the Christian religion, it containing none of these absurd incredible things, which abounded among the heathens; nor of these rites of Judaism, the reasons whereof, besides the will of God in enjoining them, could not be assigned; but both the doctrines and precepts of the Christian religion are fitted for mankind, and so congenial to his nature, that they well deserve the designation of *reasonable service*, or rational worship, God having made our souls and them of a piece.

And the fourth character of our religion is, its easiness; *Christ's yoke is easy, and his burden light*, Matt. xi. 30. Wherein we are freed from all the barbarous and cruel rites of Gentilism, and from the oppressive bondage of Judaism, *which was a law of ordinances*, and *a yoke that our fathers*

were not able to bear; but that we are called to by Christ is so simple, so easy, and so plain, that well may we say *his commandments are not grievous*, 1 John v. 3.

Having given this hint of the design and characters of the Christian religion, I hold it not necessary to dwell on a further deduction of those generals into more particular branches, nor to make this scheme of religion good by any longer proof, the position I have laid down being so obvious to the reason of every considering person; wherefore I go on to examine if there be any such system of doctrines or opinions among pretenders to Christianity, which tends to the overthrowing and enervating of this whole design, and whose characters are directly opposite to these I have mentioned; and the less avowed and the more disguised that society be, as it is more likely to prevail, since error and vice are not so formidable in their own colours as when veiled with the pretences of truth and virtue; so it will better agree with that great character the prophecies give of this defection, that it was a *mystery, and had mystery on its forehead*, Rev. xvii. 15.

And here remains the sad part of my discourse; for what lover of mankind can with pleasure either satisfy his own reason, or convince the judgment of others, in a matter the issue whereof is to prove so great a part of the Christian societies to be antichristian and adulterate? And certainly, if my love to truth, and the honour of my Redeemer and his gospel, and by consequence a zeal for souls, did not engage me to this search, I could easily quit the task, and choose more easy and pleasant subjects for the exercise of my thoughts; but the wisdom of God having declared it a part of wisdom to observe the characters of the Antichristian Beast, I therefore, though not without pain, engage in the survey of it.

And first, in the entry it will be a bad omen, of no good to be expected from any society that shall study to keep her members in ignorance, and to bar them the study of the holy scriptures, which being the revelation of the whole counsel of God, and written by plain and simple men, and at first directed to the use of the rude illiterate vulgar, for teaching them the mysteries of godliness and the path of life, it is a shrewd indication, that if any studied to hide this light under a candlestick, and to keep it in an unknown tongue, or forbid the

body of Christians the use of it, (though its native tendency be to enlighten the understanding and to inflame the will, it being given out by God for that end,) that those must be conscious to themselves of great deformity to that rule, and apprehend that if it were more known their doctrine would be less believed, especially since the hardest part of the scriptures are the writings of the Old Testament: and yet these were communicated to all of that dispensation, who were commanded by Christ to search them, and who did educate their children in them, continuing that holy care to a high degree even to this day. Now, except it be said that it is fitter all be kept under darkness in the new dispensation than it was in the old, no account can be given for the zeal is used in any church to keep their children in such ignorance; and yet this is a part of the distinguishing characters of the new dispensation from the old, that light hath appeared in it. Now all may know how guilty those of Rome are in this; what pains are taken to detract from the authority of the scriptures; how they quarrel, sometimes its darkness, sometimes its ambiguousness, sometimes the genuineness of its originals, and always complain of its being too much perused, and therefore let as little of it be put in vulgar tongues as can be; read it publicly in an unknown tongue, and permit no private person the use of it without allowance from his confessor: of which though in some places the reformation hath made them more liberal, yet where there is no hazard of that, they betray their aversion for the scriptures too palpably in all their writings and discourses.

But now to pursue my design more closely, I must call to mind the first branch of the Christian religion, which teacheth how God is to be worshipped in a pure and spiritual way; and see how far this is contradicted. And here I must consider the idolatry of the Gentiles, which was of two kinds: the one was, when the true God was worshipped in a false manner; the other was, when Divine adoration was offered to those who were no gods. Of the first I shall reckon two kinds: the first was, when an image or figure was erected for representing the Deity to the senses, and adoration offered to God through it; in which case, though perhaps the herd did formally worship the image, yet their philosophers declared they

meant these only for exciting the senses and imagination, and not for being worshipped; much less that the Deity should be conceived like unto them, as we find both in Celsus, Julian, and Maximus Tyrius. Now this form of adoration is contrary both to the Divine essence and command; for God must either be conceived like such an image, or not. If like to it, then a great indignity is done to the Divine nature, greater than if a toad or a worm were set out as the image of a king, to have civil reverence paid to it; since he is of his own essence incomprehensible and invisible, and so hath no shape or figure. In a word, it abases our thoughts of God, when we figure him to ourselves. But if we conceive God not like such an image, then why is it used, except to be a snare to the vulgar, who will be ready to think God like unto it? and certain it is, that whatever the more refined or abstracted wits may conceive of these images, yet the vulgar offer up their adorations directly to them, and conceive God to be like unto them.

This worship is also contrary to the Divine precept, who made it one of the Ten Commandments which himself delivered to his people, Exod. xx. 4, that *no graven image nor likeness should be made to be worshipped*. And the reason given shews the law was perpetual, *for God is ever jealous of the glory due to him*. Now what kindness those of Rome have to this command may be guessed by their striking it out of their Catechisms, as if it were only an appendix of the first: but if we read the whole Old Testament, it will furnish us with large discoveries of God's displeasure at this kind of worship, to which the Jews were so inclinable; *but God would not give his praise to graven images*, Isa. xlii. 8. Now here it is to be remembered, that the Jewish dispensation was low and carnal when compared to that to which we are called: if then this worship was not allowed of to them, it is much less to be allowed of among Christians.

Another part of the false worship of the heathens was, that they believed the Deity and Divine power was, by mystical and magical ways, affixed to some bodies, as the sun or stars are; or to some temples, and to some Ancilia and Palladia, which they believed came down from heaven, Acts xix. 35, to which they held God to be present and adherent, and therefore worshipped them. And of kin to this was the Israelites their wor-

shipping the calf in the wilderness, Exod. xxxii; for it is clear they looked on it as their God, who had brought them out of Egypt, therefore could not possibly be adoring the Egyptian god that was an ox, but the feast that was to Jehovah; and the Psalm cvi. verse 20, that says, *they changed their glory into the similitude of an ox*, do shew that they worshipped the true God, though in a false manner. Neither is it to be imagined that Aaron the prophet and saint of the Lord, though very guilty in this matter, could for all that be so criminal as to make a false God: but the most satisfying account of his fault is, that when he saw God in the mount, Exod. xxiv. 10, God appeared in that figure that was afterwards in the most holy place, which was to be framed after the pattern seen in the mount. And if so, then God appeared between the cherubims: now the figure of a cherub was the same with that of a calf in its hinder parts, Ezek. i. 7. And if we compare verse 10 of that chapter with Ezek. x. 14, what in the first place is called *the face of an ox*, is in the second called *the face of a cherub*, which tells us clearly what was the figure of the cherub. And therefore Aaron seeing the people desired a sensible symbol of God's presence among them, he made choice of that he had seen in the mount about the Divine glory; and yet all that did not excuse his fault in the sight of God.

In like manner, after the tabernacle and temple were set up, wherein were the cherubims, when Jeroboam revolted, *he set up calves*, 1 Kings xii. 28, 29, as is probable upon the same account, but no doubt continued in all points the worship of the true God, as it was at Jerusalem, as might be proved from many particulars; but the sin wherewith he *made Israel to sin* was the worshipping of the true God by a false symbol. The like account is to be given of the idolatry of Gideon's ephod, Judges viii. 27, and of the worshipping the brasen serpent, 2 Kings xviii. 4, where certainly the true God was adored, and yet the people went a whoring from him in that worship.

And here the title of *whoredom*, given to idolatry so often in the Old Testament, is to be considered; the importance whereof is, that God by covenanting with his people is married to them, to be their God; and the conjugal duty they owe him is adoration: when therefore other creatures have

any share of that bestowed on them, spiritual whoredom is committed.

Now how sad the application of this to the Christian church must be, all may judge, who know how great a part of Christendom worship God by images, and how the adored and incomprehensible Trinity is painted as an old man with a child in his arms, and a dove over the child's head: though *no man hath seen the Father at any time*, John vi. 46. And the Son, as God, can no more be represented by an image than the Father; and the Holy Ghost, though once appearing in the symbolical representation of a dove, cannot, without idolatry, be represented and worshipped under that figure. Neither can any apology be offered for this, which could not, with the same reason, have cleared both Jews and Gentiles of idolatry. And whatever more abstracted minds may think of these images, yet none that considers the simplicity of the vulgar, the frailty of man, and his inclination to apprehend all things as sensible, can doubt but that the rabble do really conceive of God as like these figures, and do plainly worship them. It is further to be considered, that though the Son of God was man, yet as man he is not to be worshipped; and therefore the setting out of figures and statues for his human nature, (which by the way are no real adumbrations, but only the fancies of painters,) and worshipping these as the images of the Son of God, is no less idolatry than to worship the Father as an old man.

And further, the worship of the mass is idolatry as evidently as any piece of Gentilism ever was: for if it be certain that Christ is not in the hostie, which shall be afterwards made out, then to adore him as there, must be idolatrous. Neither will it serve for excuse to say that Christ is truly worshipped as present; and if he be not there, it is only a mistake about the presence, but no idolatry can be committed, the worship being offered to a proper object, who is God. But if this apology free them of idolatry, it will also clear those heathens who worshipped some statues or creatures in which they conceived God was present: so that they might have pleaded it was the great and true God they adored, believing him there present, as their fathers had formerly believed. But he were very gentle to idolaters who upon such a plea would clear them of that crime. What then is to be said of that church that holds

it the greatest piece of her religion to adore the bread with the same devotion they would pay to Christ were he visibly present; who call the bread *God*, carry it about in processions, and worship it with all the solemnity imaginable? And finally, the worship they give the cross is likewise an adoring of God under a symbol and representation. And thus we have seen the parallel of Rome-Heathen and Rome-Christian runs but too just.

But the next kind of the heathens' idolatry was their worshipping of others beside God; whom they held of two ranks: some that were so pure that they never dwelt in bodies; others they judged to be the souls of deceased men, after their death acknowledged and honoured with Divine honour. And this kind of idolatry was first begun at Babylon, where Ninus made the statue of his father Belus be set up, and worshipped it: and from him all these lesser gods were called Belim or Baalim. Now concerning these, the heathens believed that they were certain intermedial powers that went betwixt God and men, by whom all good things were conveyed to mortals, by whom also all our services were offered to the gods. Thus the nations had *gods many and lords many*, 1 Cor. viii. 5. And these lesser deities or demons they adored by erecting statues to them about their burial-places, where they built temples for them, and worshipped them. And from this hint of Babylon's being the mother of this kind of idolatry we may guess why the apostasy of that city, which, in St. John's days, *did reign over the kingdoms of the earth*, Rev. xvii. 18, is shadowed forth under the name of *Babylon;* to hold out, that the corruption it was to fall into was to be of a kind with that begun in Babylon: and the character of a whore doth likewise agree well with this.

Now if we compare with this the worship of angels and saints in the Roman church, we shall find the parity just and exact. For, after the conversion of the Roman empire, it is not to be denied, but that in order to the gaining of the heathen world to a compliance with Christianity, the Christians did, as near as was possible, accommodate themselves to the heathenish customs: and therefore, instead of their gods, they set up the demon and Baal-worship to the apostles and other saints and martyrs; which Theodoret doth most ingenuously acknow-

ledge to have been set in the stead of their gods. They became afterwards so exact in the parallel, that as the heathens had of these lesser gods for every nation, so there was a saint appointed for every nation: St. Andrew for Scotland, St. George for England, St. Patrick for Ireland, and many more for other nations. And as every house among the heathens had their household god, so every person was taught to have a tutelar saint and angel. And as among the heathen there were gods for all trades, for all sicknesses, and for every virtue; so in Antichristianism there were saints for every disease, for every profession, and for all the graces. And as the heathens built temples for them, so did also Babylonish Rome. And here an odd remark is in my way of this conformity, that the Pantheon at Rome, dedicated in Augustus his time, to Cybele, the mother of the gods, and to all the gods, was afterwards consecrated to the Virgin and all the saints. And as the heathens offered prayers, made vows, observed days, brought presents, used processions in honour to these lesser gods, and worshipped their statues and images; so all this by degrees crept into Rome-Christian, as might be branched out in more particulars than the nature of so short a discourse will allow of. It is true, the worship of images came not in before the eighth century; but after that time it engaged all that received it into a high degree of madness for advancing that heathenish piece of worship. And shall I here tell what is known to all who have seen the forms of that church? how you shall find their churches all over dressed up with images and statues, gorgeously apparelled and well adorned; where the poor vulgar are lying prostrate before them, saying their devotions, and perhaps washing the feet of their shrines with their tears, and with great affection kissing the hem of their garments: and if, through the tricks of the priest, the image seem to nod or smile on them, (which is not unfrequent,) with what joy do they go away, as if some angel had saluted them from heaven! And here it were too long to reckon up the abominations of this saint-worship which are offered to the Virgin, with the blasphemous titles given her, and prayers made to her; as if she were more merciful and gentle to sinners than her blessed Son. What shall I tell of the whole Psalms turned to her? the words of *Goddess* and

Lady being put in the place of *God* and *Lord:* and that from the eleventh century, in which the form of the numbering their prayers by beads was begun, ten go to the Virgin for one to God. How many more worship her than do her Son! How many more churches are built to her than to her Son! And how many pilgrimages are made to her shrines and relics! And thus, I think, little doubting will remain, that the worship of the Baalim, begun at Babylon, is now set up in the Christian Rome.

Now how contrary this is to the Divine nature, common reason may suggest; as also to the exaltation of the person of Christ: Isaiah xlii. 8, *God is a jealous God, and will not give his glory to another.* We have but *one Lord Jesus Christ,* 1 Cor. viii. 6, who by his most precious blood shed for us purchased the honour of being Mediator betwixt God and man: and therefore Christians ought only to make mention of his name. Beside, the great evil of idolatry is, that it debases the soul of the profane worshipper, *for like them are all they that trust in them,* Psalm cxv. 8. It leads away the mind from that inward, free, and spiritual converse and fellowship with God, to which the gospel invites us, and carries it out into an external, sensible, and dead religion: it stifles the power of true piety, making it die out in formal and stupifying superstition: and the plagues which heaven pours out on those ungodly worshippers are heavy and great. A black roll of them is in the end of the first chapter to the Romans, which were the consectaries on their not glorifying of God as God, which is branched out into the two kinds I have discoursed of. The first is verse 23, *They changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man,* &c.; and the second is verse 25, *Who worshipped and served the creature more than* (or besides) *the Creator.*

And will the poor distinctions of *dulia* and *latria* save them from this guilt? Alas! these are parts of the mystery by which they would veil their abominations; but their nakedness is not hid with this thin veil. For we see how simply all religious worship offered to creatures displeased God. Neither did the prophets tell the Israelites that a kind of worship called *dulia* or *service* might be paid to creatures; but the *latria* or *adoration* was only proper to God; indeed they dreamed

not of this subtilty: and when St. John offered to fall down before the angel, he warns him not to do it, as being not only his fellow creature, but his fellow servant, Rev. xix. 10; by which all that prostration for worship is declared unlawful: and what can be called adoration, if to offer prayers, to make vows, to sing hymns, to observe days, and to build churches, be not such? These nice distinctions, which the schoolmen have devised, will serve in no stead in the great day, *when God's jealousy shall burn like fire* against all that have dishonoured him by this profane worshipping of creatures. And it is certain, that however some speculative people may have distinct notions of these kinds of worship, yet the vulgar, in their practice, make no difference at all, but place all their trust in them, fly to them in their troubles as to their refuge and strong hold; whereby that faith and confidence, which is only due to God and his Son, is abated, so much of it being bestowed on creatures. And what a baseness of mind doth it discover, for men, to whom God hath revealed so much of the riches of his grace, and hath allowed constant and free access to his throne, with the largest encouragements and assurances of being heard and accepted by him: and who hath given mankind a Mediator, who in the likeness of our flesh did express the greatest and freest love imaginable, dying for us, and being now our Advocate and Intercessor with his Father: that instead of conversing immediately with God and Christ in the exercises of devotion, we should betake ourselves to a dead and lifeless invocating of those, of whose hearing us we can have no assurance, and in which there can be no comfort nor true joy found.

So much of the object of worship: the manner of it is next to be considered. We observed before, that God called us in the gospel to a lively and spiritual worship; and this was first in opposition to the sorceries of the Gentile worship, and next to the heavy yoke of the Jewish bondage. How much of sorcery and enchantments was used in heathenism, every one that gives account of their forms do mention; but indeed all they used was nothing, if compared with the enchantments of the Roman church. And first of all, can any thing look liker a charm than the worshipping God in an unknown tongue, in which the worshipper is capable of no converse with God by these parts of worship, which he doth not understand? Next,

the muttering so large portions of the worship, chiefly in the office of the mass, what doth it look like but the mumbling of a charm? But shall I here tell of the charming of water, of salt, of wax candles, for driving away of devils? Shall I next tell of the christening of bells, the hallowing of oil, the touching of beads, the touching of little pebbles; which shall have a virtue against sickness of all kinds, thunders and lightnings, and tentations of the Devil? Shall I next tell of the consecrating roses, Agnus Dei's, medals, and the like? Or shall I tell of their exorcisms and charms for driving out devils, with all the strange actions used in them? Shall I mention the relics, and all the virtues believed to be in them, yea, and derived from them? Shall I mention their privileged altars, their jubilees, the prayers upon which indulgences are granted, their solemn processions, together with all the small tricks that are used in every part of their worship? All this would be endless. These things cannot but eat out the power of religion, and introduce a dry and empty skeleton of enchanted actions, instead of that lively image of God which the Christian religion designs to restore in us.

In a word, shall I tell how the sacramental actions are polluted by the superfetation of so many new rites, whereby they are wholly changed from their original simplicity?

In baptism, instead of washing with water, "in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost," how have they added so many adulterated rites! The child must be thrice blown upon, then a charm used for turning the Devil out of him; he must be anointed with holy oil, and hallowed salt must be put in his mouth; sanctified garments also must be put on him, and a holy wax candle in his hand, and the priest's spittle must be gently stroked upon him. Whether doth all this look like the simplicity of the spouse of Christ, or the attire of the harlot?

And in the other sacrament a great deal more ado is made; so that any indifferent spectator, who were not warned of it, would swear it were a solemn piece of pageantry: the priest must come in clothed with rich embroidered vestments; then he goes to the altar; sometimes reads on the one side, then he turns to the other; often he bows, and kisses, and crosses, sometimes single, sometimes thrice repeated crosses; most of

the office he mutters, though what he says is all alike understood, being in an unknown tongue; sometimes he turns to the people, and gives them a short barbarian benediction; then he goes on till he comes to the five wonder-working words; and then, instead of the bread, which the force of these words hath driven to nothing, behold a God, to be worshipped by the spectators. And after the adoration, the God is to be devoured by the priest; which made the Arabian say, "He never saw a sect of religion so foolish as the Christians were, who with their teeth devoured the God they had adored."

Certainly all this looks so like a piece of extravagance, especially if the simplicity of the first institution be considered, that many will doubt if it be possible that such worship can be received in any corner of the Christian world. And by these hints, though an hundred more might be instanced, let it be guessed what is become of the simplicity of the Christian religion, when it is so vitiated in all the parts and branches of it; and whether that genuine sincere spirituality appear in it which the gospel holds forth to the world: these things having a native tendency for leading away the soul from attending upon God, in her acts of worship, which is the only thing for which external worship is to be continued in, that in it we may jointly concur to converse with our Maker. If from this I should reckon up all the tricks are used in secreter worship, what stories should I tell of the pattering over the beads, of the multiplying little unintelligible prayers, the using of penances, some whereof are ridiculous for their gentleness, and others of them are as formidable for their horror, and fitter for the priests of Baal or the worshippers of Diana Taurica, than for those that worship the living God with joy and gladness of heart! Now by the performance of these the simple deluded people imagine themselves reconciled to God, and secured from his wrath; and so go about them merely in the opinion of a charm.

But I must next shew how the multiplicity of the Jewish rites was also brought in upon Christendom, though Christ came to set us at liberty from that pedagogy, which was made up of ordinances and lifeless precepts, *that could not make the doer thereof perfect*; nothing being enjoined in the Christian religion but that which was of itself easy and proper for the

great design of purifying our souls. Now such as have brought in a yoke of ordinances that have no tendency to the cleansing of our souls, but oppress us with their tyrannical burdensomeness, being both heavy and numerous, must be looked on as the introducers of a new Judaism for oppressing the Christian world. What a heap of new superadded forms have the high priests of Rome brought upon those who stoop to their tyranny! And how much sanctity do they place in them! enjoining severer censures on the violation of these, than on the greatest transgressions against either the moral or positive laws of God! How many holydays have they instituted! how much distinction of meats, of fasting, and abstinence! And how like are their jubilees and pilgrimages to the jubilees and yearly trotting up to Jerusalem which was among the Jews! In a word, there is not a piece of worship about which there is not a greater appendage of vain, pompous, and withal burdensome ceremonies, than were among the Jews.

Shall I here mention the five superadded sacraments to the two instituted by Christ, with all the rites belonging to each of them, or recount all the rites in their multifarious ordinations? Shall I tell of the laying up the bodies when dead, and of the forms of their burials? the burning of lamps in the clearest day, together with the incense that perfumes the worship, which are clear pieces of antiquated Judaism? In a word, no part of the parallel holds more exactly than that *they are zealous of the traditions of their fathers, whereby the commandments of God are made of none effect;* and that *they honour God with their lips, when their hearts are far from him;* and *worship him in vain, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men,* Matt. xv. 8, 9.

And hitherto I have discoursed upon the first limb of Antichristianism, and have discovered too evident indications of the contradictions in it to the first branch of the design of Christianity; whereby the worship of God is partly adulterated, and partly smothered by a heavy and troublesome load of useless and lifeless performances, which must needs lead out the soul from an inward attending on God, or free converse with him.

The second branch of Christianity is, the holding forth that mysterious contrivance of the wisdom and goodness of God,

for reconciling the world to himself by his dear Son; whom he gave to the death for us, and also raised up, making him both Lord and Christ; whose glory and dignity is vulgarly branched out in these his three offices, of Prophet, Priest, and King.

By the first of which, he revealed the Father and his whole counsel to mankind in plain and simple discourses, afterwards committed to writing by the faithful eye and ear-witnesses of his majesty. His prophetic office, therefore, is chiefly acknowledged in our grateful receiving these discoveries, and our studying to adjust both our faith and practice to that unerring rule. But can any thing be more contradictory to this, than to keep the knowledge of these writings from Christians, to accuse their darkness and defects, and to apprehend great danger from their diligent perusal; to vilify that sacred study, preferring the lame and lifeless discourses of men to the words of eternal Wisdom? For we must consider, that our study of the gospel is of the same nature with a personal following of Christ when on earth, to see his miracles, and hear his doctrine: the same is also to be said of the Acts and Epistles of the Apostles. Now to bar the vulgar from this, is to hinder them to hear and see Christ and his apostles, as if that were a privilege restricted to churchmen. What shall be then said of these who call the scriptures "a nose of wax, the source of all heresies, a book written not on design, but upon particular emergents;" and do assert its incompleteness, unless made up by the traditions of the church? Is not this to add to the words of that book, and to accuse the faithful witness of unfaithfulness? But worse than all this is held by these who will have all the authority of the scriptures to depend on the church, which must be believed in the first place.

But here a great difference is to be made betwixt the testimony of a witness and the authority of a judge; the former is not denied to the church, and so the Jews had the oracles of God committed to them; but that doth not prove the authority of their sanhedrim infallible, or superior to scripture; and in this case more cannot be ascribed to the Christian church than was proper to the Jewish in our Saviour's time. But further, if the scripture be to be believed on the testimony of the church, then upon what account is the church first be-

lieved? It cannot be said, because of any testimony in scripture, for if it gave authority to the scriptures, it cannot receive its authority from their testimony. How then shall it be proved that the church must be believed? or must it be taken from their own word? And yet no other reason can be given to prove the church infallible. For to say that they have continued in a succession of bishops from the apostles' days, concludes nothing, unless it be first proved that the doctrine of the apostles was of God; otherwise the Mahometan religion is as much to be believed, since for many ages a succession of priests have believed it. Further, the Greek churches drive up the series of their bishops to the apostles' days, as well as the Roman; why then should not their authority be likewise acknowledged infallible? In fine, must the vulgar go and examine the successions of the bishops, and judge about all the dubious elections, whether the conveyance have been interrupted or not? Certainly were this to be done, it were an impossible achievement, and harder than the study of the originals of both Testaments: therefore the vulgar must simply believe the authority of the church on her own testimony; which is the most absurd thing imaginable; and this to every individual will resolve into the testimony of their priest. Behold then a goodly foundation for building our faith upon!

Christ's prophetic office is also invaded by pretence of the church's infallibility in expounding scriptures; for if this be granted, the whole authority will be devolved on the church; for by this doctrine she may teach what she will; and were the scripture evidence never so full to the contrary, yet whatever wrested exposition she offers, though visibly contrary to the plain meaning of the words, must be believed. But with whom this power and authority is lodged, is not agreed to among themselves; some yielding it to the high priest of the church, when in his chair; others to the great sanhedrim of Christendom in a general council; others to both jointly: but all this is asserted without proof; for that of Christ's of *telling the church*, Matt. xviii. 17, so often repeated by them, is meant of particular offences, and so is restricted to the case of differences among brethren, and relates not to points of doctrine. Besides, the context of these words doth clearly shew them applicable to every parochial church, and yet their infallibility cannot be

asserted. So it is clear that Christ doth only speak of a jurisdiction for quieting of differences among brethren.

That of *the gates of hell their not prevailing against the church*, Matt. xvi. 18, proves not the pretence of infallibility. And indeed the translation of that place deserves amendment, and instead of *hell* that word is to be rendered *grave*: so that the meaning of the phrase is, death (which is the mouth and gate through which we pass into the grave, and is so used by Greek writers) shall never prevail against the church; that is, the church shall never die.

Neither will that of *the Spirit of truth leading into all truth*, John xvi. 13, advance the cause a whit, since that promise relates to all believers; and it is a part of the happiness of the new dispensation, that all in it shall be taught of God. And the promise of *founding the church on St. Peter*, Matt. xvi, saith as little; for suppose the rock on whom the church was to be built were St. Peter himself, which I shall not much controvert, that is not peculiar unto him, since *we are all built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets*; and on the *twelve foundations of the new Jerusalem are written the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb*. But what will that prove for a series of the bishops of Rome?

And finally, for *the keys of the kingdom of heaven*, Matt. xvi. 19, their being given to St. Peter: that saith no more, but that he was to open the gospel, which is usually called *the kingdom of God*, or *of heaven*, in the New Testament. Now the use of keys being to open the door, this was peculiar to St. Peter's honour, who did first publish the gospel both to Jews and Gentiles, and in particular did first receive the Gentiles into the new dispensation. But this hath no relation to the bishops of Rome, nor to the pretended infallibility of that see.

That which hath the fairest appearance of reason is, that if there be no absolute unerring court on earth, for deciding of controversies, there shall be no end of them; but every private man may, upon the pretence of some ill-understood place of scripture, break the unity of the church; and so the peace of the church is in hazard of being irrecoverably lost. But how specious soever this may appear, it hath no weight in it: for it is certain, that vice as well as error is destructive of reli-

gion; and it will be no imputation on our religion, that the one be no more guarded against than the other is. If then there be no authority for repressing vice, but the outward discipline of the church, it is not incongruous there is no other authority for suppressing of error but that same of the discipline of the church. It is certainly a piece of humility for a man to suspect his own thoughts, when they lie cross to the sentiments of the guides and leaders of the church: but withal a man ought to be in all he does *fully persuaded in his own mind;* and we are commanded to *try the spirits, and not to believe every spirit,* 1 John iv. 1. Now reason being the chief excellency of man, and that wherein the Divine image doth mainly consist, it were very absurd to deny man a rational judging and discerning of these things, wherein his eternal interest is most concerned. Besides, the nature of religion, it being a thing suitable to the powers of the soul, shews that a man must have a conviction of the truth of it on his mind, and that he cannot be bound, in contradiction to his own apprehensions, to receive any opinions merely upon the testimony of others.

If to confirm all this, I should add all that can be brought from history for proving general councils to have erred in matters of faith, or that popes have been heretics, or that they have been anathematized as such by other popes and general councils, I should be too tedious. But in the end, how shall the vulgar know the definitions of councils, or the decrees of popes? or must they be blindly determined by the priest's assertion? Certainly this were to expose them to the greatest hazards, since they are not suffered to found their faith upon the scriptures: nor doth the church reveal her doctrines to them, so that their faith must be resolved upon the bare testimony of a priest, who is perhaps both ignorant and licentious. And by this we may judge to what a pass the souls of the people are brought by this doctrine.

In a word, *we are not the servants of men*, nor bound to their authority; for none can be a judge, but where he hath power both to try and to coerce. Now none but God can either search our hearts or change them; for as no human power can know our thoughts, so neither can it turn them, which are not in our own power, much less in the power of

others; therefore our consciences can and must only fall within God's jurisdiction: and since the renovation of the image of God consists in knowledge, and religion designs an union of our souls to Divine truth, that we may freely converse with it, it will follow, that all these pretences of absolute authority and infallibility in teaching are contrary to Christ's prophetic office, who came *to reveal the Father to us.*

The second of Jesus Christ's offices was the priestly, without which the former had never been effectual; for had we known never so perfectly the will of God, without a method had been laid down for reconciling sinners to him, it was in vain to think of religion, since nothing sinners could do was able to appease God, or expiate sin: but this was fully done by the sacrifice of that Lamb of God, *who became sin for us, and bare our sins in his own body: in whom we have redemption, even forgiveness of sin through his blood,* 2 Cor. v. 21. 1 Pet. ii. 24. Ephes. i. 7. If then any have derogated from the value of this satisfaction, they have offered the utmost indignity to the highest love, and committed the crime of the greatest ingratitude imaginable: who would requite the most inconceivable love with such a sacrilegious attempt! But how guilty are they of this, who would set the merits and works of men in an equality with the blood of God! as if by these we were justified, or owed our title to glory to our own performances! whereas we are taught by the oracles of God, that *by grace we are saved; that God only hath made the difference betwixt us and others; and that he hath freely chosen us in his Son Christ Jesus,* Ephes. ii. 5. 1 Cor. iv. 7. And, alas! what are we, or what is all we do, that it can pretend to the lowest degree of God's acceptance, without he freely both help us in it, and accept of us for it! so that when he rewards us for our services with eternal life, he freely crowns his own free gifts to us. For when we consider how great a disproportion there is betwixt our best services and eternal glory; when we also remember how all our good actions flow from the principles of Divine grace freely given, but withal reflect on the great defects and imperfections that hang about our best performances, we will not be able to entertain any thoughts of our meriting ought at the hands of God. And certainly the deeper impressions we have, either of the evil of sin or the

goodness of God, we will be further from a capacity of swelling big in our own thoughts, or of claiming any thing on the pretensions of justice or debt. It is true, this doctrine of merit is so explained by some of that church, that there remains no ground of quarrelling it, except for the term's sake, which is indeed odious and improper, (though early used by the ancients in an innocent sense.) But many of that church acknowledge there can be no obligation on God by our works, but that which his own promise binds upon him; which none, who believe the truth of the promises of the gospel, can question; yet still we must remember, that we owe all to the love of Jesus, and nothing to ourselves; which, as it is the matter of the hallelujahs of glorified saints, so should be the subject of our daily acknowledgments; wherefore we must abominate every thing that may seem to detract from this. But alas! were all this zeal, which many of that communion own for merits and good works, meant for the advancing a holy and spiritual life, it would carry a good apology with it, and its noble design would very much qualify the severity of its censure; but when these good works, which for so many ages were highly magnified, were the building of churches, the enriching of abbeys, pilgrimages, and other trifling and voluntary pieces of will-worship, advanced for the secular interests of the church; what shall be said of all that pains was used by the monks for advancing them, but that they were willing to sell the value of the blood and merits of Christ for advancing their own secular interests and devised practices? Alas! how far are these from that holiness and sanctity, which must qualify us for the kingdom of God and the inheritance of the saints!

And to end this matter, let me add one thing, which is most evident to all who have observed the methods of the directors of consciences in that church, that with whatever distinctions this matter be varnished over among them, yet the vulgar do really imagine they buy and sell with Almighty God, by their undergoing these laws of the church and penances imposed by their confessor: which, as it nourisheth the life of pride and self-love, so it detracts from the value they ought to set on the blood of Christ, as their only title to heaven and glory.

And to this I must add, that distinction of the temporary

and eternal punishments sin deserves: the latter whereof they acknowledge are removed by the blood of Christ; but the former must be expiated by ourselves, either by sufferings in this life, or those we must endure in purgatory, unless by the pope's charity we be delivered from them. Now how contrary this is to the value we are taught to set on the blood of Christ, all may judge. Ephes. ii. 15, and v. 27, *By Christ peace is made: we are reconciled to God; he represents us to the Father without spot or wrinkle.* And much more of this nature meeting us in scripture, declares how plenary his satisfaction was; nothing being left undone by him for removing the guilt and demerit of sin. And what comfortless doctrine this is, we may soon apprehend how it takes away that joy in God, at the approaches of death, since there is such hazard of direful miseries following. Now this was no small part of the mystery by which the world was brought under their dominion; and therefore great pains was taken for rooting the belief of it deep in all men's hearts; many visions and apparitions were vouched for its proof; and all the lives of the saints, that were written for divers ages, were full of such fabulous narrations; some souls were said to be seen standing in burning brimstone to the knees, some to the middle, some to the chin; others swimming in caldrons of melted metal, and devils pouring the metal down their throats: with many such affrighting stories.

But for all this, the proof from scripture was only drawn from one wrested place of the apostle Paul, 1 Cor. iii. 12—15, who saith, that in the day of the Lord, such as built upon the foundation of Christ superstructures of wood, hay, and stubble, should be saved, because they kept the foundation, *yet so as by fire.* But this was only a proverbial form of speech, to express the risk they run to be such as of one that escapes out of a fire; such proverbial speeches being usual in scripture; as that of the prophet, Zech. iii. 2, *Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?* or of the apostle Jude, verse 23, *Some save with fear, pulling them out of the fire.* And any considering person will, at first view, see how slender a foundation this was for the superstructure built upon it.

But the way which was contrived for preserving souls from, or rescuing them out of purgatory, will discover what were the

inducements of advancing the belief of it with such zeal, which was thus framed. It is believed by that church, that beside the commands that necessarily oblige all Christians, there are many counsels in the gospel, in order to the attaining a higher pitch of perfection; such as the counsels of poverty and chastity, or the like; and they teach, that such as did not obey these cannot be said to have sinned; but, on the other hand, those who have obeyed them shall not want a reward by their so supererogating beyond what was strictly bound upon them, and the reward of them is their meriting both for themselves and others an exemption from the pains of purgatory. And of all these merits, there is a common treasure of the church; wherein, for good manners' sake, the merit of Christ is the chief stock; and this is committed to the successors of St. Peter, to whom the keys of the kingdom of heaven are believed to be given, who can communicate of that spiritual treasure as they will, either for preserving souls from purgatory, or for delivering them out of it. This could not but work wonders for the exaltation of the papal dignity, when he was conceited to be honoured of God with so high a trust. This was also made an engine for advancing all the papal designs; for upon any quarrel he had with any prince, the pope proclaimed a croisade, promising exemption from purgatory to all who hazarded their lives for the service of the holy church: and the contrivance of purgatory being universally believed, this could not fail to draw great numbers about his standards: and by this means he brought most princes into that servile subjection to him, under which they groaned for many ages.

Another practice, yet more base and sordid, was, the selling of indulgences and pardons for money. Certainly here was Simon's crime committed by the pretended successors of him who of old accused him that thought the gift of God might be purchased with money, and thereupon did cast him out of the church. It were endless to tell the base arts and blasphemous discourses of the monks who were sent through the world to sell these indulgences, which in the end proved fatal to that church, since the excessive magnifying of them did first provoke Luther to examine their corruptions. It is true, they will not hear of the harsh word of selling indulgences, but

disguise it with their giving them to such as will offer alms to the church; but really this whole contrivance is so base, so carnal, and so unlike the spirit of Christianity, that to repeat it is to refute it. Here was a brave device for enriching the church, when the making great donations to it was judged so effectual for delivering out of purgatory. Who would not, out of love to his friend's soul, if he believed him frying in these flames, give liberally of his goods? but much rather would a man give all that he had for his own security, especially when on his death-bed he were beset with persons who were confounding him with dismal apprehensions, and thus trafficking with him for the exchange of his soul. Hence sprung the enriching of abbeys and churches; for every religious order hath its own peculiar merits, which they can communicate to any one of their fraternity. If then a dying man had gained their favour so much, that he was received into their order, and died wrapped in one of their frocks, then was his soul secure from the grim tormentors below. And what an endless heap of fables had they, of souls being on the brink or in the midst of the flames, and of a sudden snatched out!

But now all this trade hath quite failed them, therefore indulgences are fallen in their rates, and instead of them there are prayers to be used, and especially to be said before privileged altars, or at such times, or before such relics, that it is no hard work for any among them to ransom the souls of others, or to preserve their own. In a word, doth not all this debase the spirit of true religion, and expose it to the jealousy of atheists, as if it were a contrivance for advancing base and secular designs? And doth it not eat out the sense of true piety, when the vulgar see the guides of souls making such shameful merchandise of them, and doing it with such respect of persons, that if a man be rich enough, he is secure; whereby our Lord's blessing of the poor, and passing a woe on the rich, is reversed? But above all, what indignity is by this done to the blood of the Son of God! And how are the people carried from their dependance on him, and their value of his sufferings, by these practices!

Another art, not very remote from this, for detracting from the value of Christ's death, and the confidence we should have

in it, is the priestly absolution; wherein, after the sinner hath gone over his sins, without any sign of remorse, and told them to the priest, he enjoins a penance, the doing whereof is called a *satisfaction;* and the vulgar do really imagine that the undergoing the penance doth fully serve for appeasing God's wrath against sin; but as soon as the priest hath enjoined his penance, without waiting that they obey it, he lays his hand on their head, and says, "I absolve thee;" and after this they judge themselves fully cleansed of sin, and that they may receive the sacrament, had their former life been never so bad. It is true, the practice of the priests, in their slight penances, and hasty absolutions, and promiscuous allowing of all the holy sacrament, is condemned by many in that church, who complain of these abuses with much honest zeal; but these complaints are so little regarded, that their writings are condemned, and the corruption continues unreformed. Now what can take off more from the value of the death of Christ than to believe it in the power of a priest to absolve from sin? all the power of the church being either ministerially to declare the absolution offered in the gospel upon the conditions in it, or to absolve from the scandal which any public trespass hath given. It was counted blasphemy in Christ, when he said, *Thy sins are forgiven thee*, Mark ii. 5. 10; of which he cleared himself, from *the power which was committed to the Son of man on earth to forgive sins;* which shews it to be blasphemy in all others to pretend to absolve from sin, it being an invasion of his prerogative.

To this I might add the scorn put on religion by many of the penances enjoined for sin, such as the abstaining from flesh for so many days, the pattering over so many prayers, the repeating the penitential psalms, the going to such churches and such altars; with other ridiculous observances like these, which cannot but kill the vitals of true religion, and lead away souls from these earnest applications to Jesus Christ for pardon and renovation. And who can have any sad apprehensions of sin, who is taught such an easy way of escaping punishment?

I confess in this, as in all other parts of religion, the masters of that church have so contrived things, that their doctrines might, according to the fable of the manna, "taste plea-

sant in every man's relish;" for if any be grave and melancholy, then silence, solitude, and retirement are enjoined them; if their tempers be more fiery and sullen, severe corporal mortifications and disciplines are tasked on them, such as cruel and perhaps public whipping, or other unspeakable austerities, with which the lives of the modern saints are full; but if one be of a more jolly temper, who desires heaven at an easy rate, then some trifling penance shall serve turn. These are a few of their arts for diverting souls from flying unto Jesus, as to the sure and safe refuge from the Father's wrath, in whom only we can find sanctuary, and whom the Father has sent into the world to seek and save lost sinners. Now whether the priests in the injunction of easy penances, and giving absolution, do not violate the prerogative of Jesus, and insensibly debauch souls from that affectionate and grateful duty they owe their Redeemer, into their trifling methods and appointments, I refer it to all who know them.

Another opposition made to the priestly office of Christ is, their conceit of the sacrifice of the mass, which they believe is a formal expiation of sins, both for the living and dead who are in purgatory. Christ once offered himself up for taking away sin, which he did by that one sacrifice; and this is by the apostle stated amongst the differences which are betwixt the sacrifices of Moses, which are to be daily and yearly renewed and repeated; whereas *Christ offered one sacrifice in the end of the world*, so that there was no need of more, Heb. x. 1–3. 12. 14. Now to imagine that the priest's going through the office of the mass, and his receiving the consecrated elements, can have a virtue to expiate the sins of others, especially of the dead, is a thing so contrary to the most common impressions, that it will puzzle a man's belief to think any can credit it. And yet this is one of the masterpieces of the religion of that church. It is true, in a right sense, that sacrament may be called a *sacrifice*, as it was by the ancients, either in general, as prayers, praises, and almsdeeds are called so in scripture; or as it is a commemoration of the sacrifice of Christ: but to imagine the action hath an expiatory force in it, is a visible derogation from the value of Christ's death; and all the value in any outward sacramental action can only be derived into the soul of the receiver: but it is absurd to think one man's

action can be derived to another; and it clearly appears from the institution of the Lord's Supper, that its end was the joint communicating of believers, which is perverted manifestly by the practice of those priests who communicate in the name of the spectators.

Finally, what a derogation is it from the priestly office of Christ, one branch whereof is his intercession, to join saints or angels with him in that work, nay, and prefer them to him! which will be found too true, if the office of the Virgin, and the prayers offered to her, be compared with those offered to her Son. Did Christ, by the merits of his passion, acquire this honour at so dear a rate? and shall we, for whom he suffered, rob him so injuriously and sacrilegiously of his honour, and bestow it on these who are our fellow-servants?

But having touched this in the former part of my discourse, I advance my inquiry to the opposition given the regal office of Christ. And first, how contrary is it to the glory wherewith even his human nature and body is refulgent in heaven, to believe that five words muttered out by the priest shall have the virtue to produce his real and glorified body, instead of the annihilated elements of bread and wine, and yet under their accidents and appearances! This is a new and strange kind of humiliation, if true, by which he who is now clothed with glory, must be every day exposed under so thick, so dark, and so contemptible a covering, as are the resemblances of bread and wine. What low thoughts of his person must it breed in such minds as are capable of believing this contrivance!

Again, he, as King of the church, hath given her laws and precepts, to whose obedience she is obliged; to which none can add without they acknowledge another head, and whose obligation none can untie or dispense with; for Christ's dominion consists in this authority he hath over our consciences, which he hath vindicated into liberty, by delivering us from the bondage of corruption. If then any pretend a power of obtruding new articles on our belief, or obligations on our consciences, these must be confessed to be injurious to the dignity wherewith Christ is vested. What then shall be said of him, who pretends an authority of dispensing with and dissolving the obligation of oaths, of dissolving the wedlock bond, of

allowing of marriage in the forbidden degrees? And as for their additions to the laws of Christ, they are innumerable. And here what I mentioned last calls me to mind of a pretty device to multiply the forbidden degrees of marriage, yea, and add the degrees of spiritual kindred, that is, of kindred with our godfathers or godmothers in baptism, which is done upon no other design but to draw in more to the treasure of the church by frequent dispenses. If I should here reckon up all the additions which by the authority of that church are made to the laws of Christ, I should resume all that I have hitherto alleged, they being visible additions to the doctrine and rules of the gospel, and imposed with such unmerciful cruelty, that an anathema is the mildest of the spiritual censures they thunder against such as comply not with their tyranny; and a fagot would be its civil sanction, were the secular powers at their devotion. I do not deny but there is an authority, both in the civil and ecclesiastic powers, of enjoining things indifferent; but no authority beside Christ's can reach the conscience. Besides, if these indifferent things swell so in their number, be vain, pompous, and useless, and be imposed without all regard to the tender scruples of weak consciences, they become tyrannical; and such as do so impose them, discover their affecting a tyrannical and lordly dominion over consciences; and that they prefer their own devices to the simpler methods of Christ, and the plainer and easier rules of his gospel.

But one instance of their abrogating the laws of Christ is more signal, in their violating the sacrament of the Lord's Supper; wherein, though he instituted it under both kinds, and did so distribute it, with the express command, that all should drink of it; yet they presumed, notwithstanding of that, and though the primitive church distributed it in both kinds, which is confessed in their canon, to snatch the cup from the laity, and engross it to the clergy. Now it is to be considered, that the value of the sacramental actions flowing only from their institution, the first appointment should be most religiously observed in them: besides, the universal extent of Christ's word, *Drink ye all of it*, which was not used in the distribution of the bread, hath a particular mystery in it, to guard against the foreseen corruption of that part of it; and the reason given in the distribution of the cup shews it must

reach to all that need the blood of Christ *for the remission of sins*; which not being restrained to the priests, shews that the cup, without a direct opposition to the mind and command of Christ, ought not to be taken from the people; and any that will read the goodly reasons given for this sacrilege, will see what a low account they have of the commands of Christ, when upon such trifling pretences they will violate them. And with how much cruelty they backed this invasion of Christ's authority, the history will declare, they beginning it with a perfidious burning of two witnesses who opposed it at Constance; and occasioning so much war and bloodshed against those who adhered to the rule of the gospel in this matter, and refused to stoop to their tyranny.

But I advance to another invasion of Christ's regal authority, committed by him who pretends to be the universal bishop of the church, and to have authority over all churchmen; whom he makes swear obedience to him, and looks on them but as his delegates. It was unluckily done of Gregory the Great, to be so severe on this head, as to condemn the title of universal bishop as antichristian: but little dreamed he in how few years his successor would aspire to that height of ambition. Now by this pretence all these officers, whom Christ hath appointed to rule and feed his church, are turned out of their authority, and made subject to him: and with how much pride he treads on his fellow bishops, the histories of many ages do declare. It is true, at first, as being bishop of the imperial city, the bishops of Rome were highly esteemed; but pride and ambition began soon to leaven them: yet they were for the first four ages looked upon by the other bishops but as their fellow bishops; and by the decrees of two general councils, the bishops of Constantinople were in all things, except the precedency, made equal to them; and by the decree of the council of Nice, other metropolitans are levelled with them. And here I must tell of a "shameful forgery of three bishops of Rome, who, one after another, would have obtruded on the African churches a decree of allowing of appeals from them to the Roman see, as if it had been made at Nice: which they of Afric rejected, and upon trial found it to be none of the appointments at Nice, but a decree of the council of Sardica."

But by degrees the bishops of that city got up to the height

they are now at; and not content with their usurping over their brethren and fellow churchmen, their next attempt was upon princes, who, deriving their authority from Jesus Christ, the *King of kings, by whom kings do reign*, it was an invasion of his power to attempt against his vicegerents on earth. But the popes made no bones of this; for being now held Christ's vicars on earth, with other blasphemous titles, as *vice-God*, yea, and *Lord God*, they thought their power was limited as long as kings and emperors were not even in temporals subject to them. And therefore, from the days of pope Gregory the Seventh, they pretended to a power of deposing princes, disposing of their dominions to others, and dispensing with the oaths of fidelity their subjects had sworn to them; and it was easy for them to make crowns change their masters as they pleased: for there were always other ambitious princes ready, for their own ends, to invade the dominions of these deposed kings, upon the pope's warrant; and the generality of the people were so possessed with the pope's power of releasing souls from purgatory, and from the punishments due to sin, that they were easily prevailed upon to follow his thunders: and by that time the popes had swarms of emissaries of the begging orders, who, under shows of austere piety, gained much reverence and esteem in the world; and so got all subjected to the papal tyranny. Now, should I instance this in particulars, I should transgress the limits of a short discourse by a long history; but the lives of Gregory the Seventh, Alexander the Third, Boniface the Eighth, and Julius the Second, to mention no more, will sufficiently convince any who will be at the pains to read them, as they are written by those who lived in that communion. And Matthew of Paris will at length inform his reader how much and how often England smarted under this tyranny.

And all this is so far from being denied, that it is defended avowedly by not a few of the canonists and Jesuits, and is a doctrine dearly entertained in the court of Rome to this day; as appeared from the late attempt of pope Paul the Fifth upon Venice: but the world is now a little wiser than to be carried away by these arts; and therefore that pretence is laid to sleep, till haply the beast be healed of the wound that was given it at the reformation.

But I cannot leave this particular without my sad regrets that too deep a tincture of this spirit of antichristianism is among many, who pretend much aversion to it; since the doctrine of resisting magistrates, upon colours of religion, is so stiffly maintained and adhered to by many, who pretend to be highly reformed. But thus far have we gone through the second part of Antichrist's character, and have discovered too clear indications of a deformity to the spirit and truth of the Christian religion, in all the branches of the honour and worship due to Jesus the only *Mediator of the new covenant.*

From this I proceed to the third part of my inquiry, which is, the opposition made to the great design of the Christian religion, for elevating the souls of men into a participation of the Divine nature, whereby the soul being inwardly purified, and the outward conversation regulated, the world may be restored to its primitive innocence, and men admitted to an inward and intimate fellowship with their Maker. The first step of this renovation is, repentance; *for God commands men everywhere to repent*; and repentance and remission of sins are always united. And this being an horror at sin upon the sense of its native deformity and contrariety to the law of God, which makes the soul apprehend the hazard it hath incurred by it, so as to study by all means to avoid it in all time coming; nothing doth prepare the mind more for faith in Christ, and the study of a new life, than repentance, which must needs be previous to these. But what devices are found to enervate this? Sins must be divided into *venial* and *mortal*; the former deserving only some temporal punishment, and being easily expiated by some trifling piece of seeming devotion, and hereby many sins are struck out of the penitent's consideration: for who can have a great apprehension of that which is so slightly expiated? And this may be extended to the easy pardons given for acknowledged mortal sins: for he who thinks that God can be appeased for them with the saying by rote so many prayers, cannot possibly have deep apprehensions of their being either so displeasing to God, or so odious in themselves. But shall I to this add their asserting, that a simple attrition, which is a sorrow flowing from the consideration of any temporal evil God hath brought upon the sinner, without any regard had either to the vileness of the sin, or the

offence done to God by it; that it (I say) can suffice for justifying sinners, and qualifying them for the sacrament; whereby the necessity of contrition, and sorrow flowing from the principle of the love of God, is made only a high degree of perfection, but not indispensably necessary. In the next place, all these severities they enjoin for penances, do but tend to nourish the life of sin, when sinners see a trade set up with which they can buy themselves off from the wrath of God. To this is to be added the doctrine of indulgences, which is so direct an opposition to evangelical repentance, as if it had been contrived for dispossessing the world of the sense of it.

That which is next pressed in the gospel for uniting the souls of mankind to God is, that noble ternary of graces, faith, hope, and love; by which the soul rests in God by a holy affiance in him, believing the truth of his gospel, expecting the accomplishment of his promises, waiting for the full fruition of him, and delighting in his glorious perfections and excellencies. Now how much all this is shaken by these carnal and gross conceptions, which the Roman doctrine offers of God in their image and mass-worship, and by their idolatry to saints, is apparent. Are they not taught to confide more in the Virgin, or their tutelar saints, than in the Holiest of all? Doth not the fear of purgatory damp the hopes of future blessedness? And, finally, what impious doctrine hath been publicly licensed and printed in that church, of the degrees of the love we owe to God! some blasphemously teaching, that we are not at all bound to love him; others mincing it so, as if they were afraid of his being too much beloved!

In a word, there is an impiety in the morals of some of that church, particularly among the disciples of Loyola, beyond what was ever taught amongst the worst of the heathen philosophers, which hath been fully discovered by some of the honester and more zealous of that communion. And though these corruptions have not been avowed by the head of that church, yet, by their being publicly vented, by the deaf ear he gives to all the complaints against them, and by the constant caresses and privileges he heaps upon that order which teacheth them, he discovers either his great satisfaction in that corrupt doctrine, or that, upon the account of other interests, he is content to betray the souls of Christians into the corrup-

tion of such impious and ungodly leaders, since the order that hath owned all these corruptions is yet possessed of the consciences of the greater part of them that own that communion, they being the universal confessors. And since they license the public venting of so much corrupt doctrine in printed writings, what reason have we to suspect their base compliance with sins in their more secret and unknown practisings, with such poor deluded souls as trust to their conduct, of which many proofs are brought by others of that same church!

But I pursue my inquiry into the other traces of the Antichristian corruption of the purity and power of our most holy faith. Solemn worship and secret devotion are the great means of uniting souls to God, and of deriving the assistance of his Spirit and grace to us; but when these are performed in an unknown tongue, how uncapable are they of reaching that end! And the doctrine of the efficacy of the sacraments, for conveying of grace by the work wrought, looks like a design against all serious preparation for the worthy receiving of them; since by that doctrine a man, be he never so ill prepared, yet is sure of their efficacy; for if his priest absolve him, and he have a simple attrition for sin, without any thing of the love of God, he is by their doctrine and conduct qualified for receiving worthily, were his heart never so much united to sin, or averse from all devotion or application to Divine matters. And what complaints shall be here made of those who teach that the sure way of gaining the favour of God, which they phrase by *the keys of paradise*, is to say the *Ave*, to bid the blessed Virgin good morrow every day, or to send our guardian angel to salute her? or, finally, to wear a medal or rosary in devotion to her, though, from the first time we begin to wear it, we never again think of her? Doth not all this look like a conspiracy against the power of godliness?

But we shall next consider the moral law, which though Christ said he *came not to dissolve, but to fulfil*, Matt. v. 17, yet they have found out distinctions and doctrines to destroy it. It is true, what may be said here cannot so directly, as to every particular, be charged on the Roman church, since it hath not been decreed by pope or council; but when profane casuists have printed doctrines which tend to the subversion of

the most common principles of virtue and morality, and these are licensed according to the rule of that church; and for as public as they are, and for all the censures and complaints others have passed upon them, yet they continue without any censure from the chair of Rome: it is a shrewd presumption that they are not unwelcome to that see; though for good manners' sake they have given them no other owning, but a connivance, joined with an extraordinary cherishing of that school which vents them.

Two general doctrines they have, which at two strokes dissolve all the bonds of virtue. The one is, the doctrine of probability; the other, of good intention.

By the first they teach, that if any approved doctor of the church have held an opinion about any practical thing, as probable, any Christian may with a safe conscience follow it, were it never so much condemned by others, and did it appear with the blackest visage: and by this it is that there is scarce a sin which may not be safely hazarded on, since there have been of the approved doctors of that church, who have made a shift, by distinctions, to represent the worst actions, not only as probable, but as really good.

The next doctrine is, of good intention, whereby they teach a man to commit the grossest legerdemain with God and his own conscience imaginable; by which he may act any sin he will, provided he intend not that, but some other good design or motive: and any that will read the Provincial Letters, or the Mystery of Jesuitism, and compare their citations with the authors whence they take them, will soon be satisfied of the truth of this.

We have already seen how that church violates the two first Commandments, by her idolatry: whereby, in opposition to the first, she worships saints and angels, with those acts and expressions of adoration only due to God. The second is also palpably violated by their image-worship, and adoring God under sensible and external representations. The third is made void by the pope's pretending to dispense with oaths, and to annul their obligation, as also by their doctrines of equivocation and mental reservations, in all oaths, both assertory and promissory; besides the impious doctrines of some casuists, that justify the profaning of God's sacred name in

rash and common swearing. Their contempt of the fourth precept is not denied, it being usually among them a day of mercating, dancing, and foolish jollity; many among them teaching, that to hear mass that day doth fully answer the obligation for its observance. Their contempt of the fifth follows, upon the doctrine of the pope's power of deposing princes, and freeing the subjects from their obligation to them; by which they are taught to rebel and resist the ordinance of God. Besides, their casuists allow it as lawful to desire the parent's death, provided it be not out of malice to him, but out of a desire of good to themselves; that they may enjoy their inheritance, or be rid of their trouble. Yea, some of their impious casuists say, that children may lawfully intend the killing of their parents, and may disown them, and marry without their consent.

For the sixth Command, their casuists do generally allow to kill in defence of honour, life, or goods, even though the hazard of losing them be not near and evident, but afar off and uncertain: and they teach, that a man is not bound to stay till another smite him; but if he threaten him, or if he offend with his words, or if one know that he hath a design upon his honour, life, or goods, he may, with a good conscience, prevent and kill him. And this they extend to all sorts of persons, both secular and religious; allowing it to sons against their fathers. And they leave it free to them to execute this by whatever means they judge most proper, whether by force or surprise, or by the service of others, if they dare not attempt to kill by their own hands; which they stretch to the case of one who knows another guilty of a crime, and intends to pursue him for it; and they allow the guilty person, if he knew no other way of escape, to kill him who intends his accusation, that he may thereby preserve his life; in order to which, they also allow it lawful to kill the witnesses that may prove the crime.

As for the seventh Command, modesty cannot name their polluted doctrines about it. They barred the clergy the lawful use of marriage, but did allow them concubinate; and the public licenses given to base houses in the pope's dominions, prove that see a mother of fornications, even in the letter; the religious houses being likewise full of irreligious entanglements

into a course of life, which many times they are not able to bear; but being restrained from the honourable ordinance of God, many of these houses have proved either nests of filthiness, or of secret impurities; which it seems, by the rules of confession, and the questions their confessors put to them, are known to abound among them. And any that have read these will confess, that it defiles a chaste mind to read them; but what must it be to ask them, especially at those of a different sex? Shall I also here mention the frequent dispensing with marriages within degrees forbidden, and their as frequent dissolving of that sacred knot, though (as if they had resolved on a contradiction to all the rules of the gospel) they refuse to dissolve the bond on the account of adultery, which Christ hath made the only ground that can justify the dissolution of it?

For the eighth Command, those profane casuists have made such shifts for it, that none needs to be guilty of theft; for they teach it to be no sin to take that from another which he made no use of, but may well want; and that in such a case, he who steals, is not obliged to restitution. Others of them teach, that he who stole a great sum is not obliged to the restitution of the whole, but only of so much as may make the theft not notable: but they teach, that small thefts, even though often repeated, are but venial sins, which is an excellent doctrine for warranting servants insensibly to purloin their master's goods. They also teach arts of escaping just debts, beyond all the subtleties of false lawyers; which the Jesuits themselves have often put in practice, and have found out arts for justifying oppressive usury, defrauding of creditors, ruining of commerce, and making havoc of our neighbours' goods without injustice.

For the ninth Command, though it be so contrary to nature, that the worst of men count it a reproach to be charged with falsehood and lying, yet they have favoured it avowedly: for by their doctrines of equivocating and using mental reservations, the greatest falsities in the world may be averred, and sworn without sin; and the value they set on a strict observance of promises, and candour in them, appeared at Constance, where a whole council required Sigismund the emperor to burn John Huss and Jerome of Prague, though he had given

them his safe conduct; for they taught him, that faith was not to be kept to heretics. Another such like trip of one of the popes proved fatal both to Ladislaus, and the kingdom of Hungary, at Varna; where they, breaking the truce they had sworn to the Turk, upon the pope's warrant, were signally punished for their treachery. The doctors of the forementioned school do also teach, that he who hath borne false witness in a matter that may cost another his life, is not bound to retract it, if that retractation may bring great evils upon him. They also propose methods for suborning witnesses, and falsifying of writs and records without any sin; and that all this may be done to defame a person with some horrid imputation, who is led as a witness to prove any thing against one, that thereby he may be cast from witnessing.

And as for the tenth Command, they have struck out all the first motions of the mind to evil from being accounted sins; and by their division of sins into venial and mortal, they make sure enough work of this command, that it shall not be broken mortally. It were an endless work to go and make out all these particulars, of their dissolving the moral law, by clear proofs: but he who desires satisfaction in that, will find it in the Provincial Letters, or the Morals of the Jesuits.

But if we pass from the law to the gospel, we shall find they have made no less bones of it. We are all over the gospel called to be heavenly minded, to despise the world, and to set our affections on things above; and particularly churchmen are taught not to seek the riches, splendour, and vanities of a present world; which was most vigorously enforced by the example of Christ and his holy apostles. But how contrary to this is that religion, whose great design is, the enriching and aggrandizing of the teachers and pastors of it, chiefly of him who pretends to be the supreme and sole pastor! I need not here remind the reader of the trade of indulgences, by which that church rose to its riches and pomp; nor need I tell what a value they set on outward actions of piety; the chief of these being the enriching of churches and abbeys; and how these were commended to the world as the sure means of attaining eternal life. Shall I add to this the visible and gross secularity and grandeur in which the head and other prelates of that church do live; the head of it being in all things a temporal

prince, perpetually busied in intrigues of state, and balancing the princes of Europe, and chiefly of Italy? and what base and simoniacal practices abound in that court? All, who have written of it with any degrees of ingenuity, do acknowledge all things are venal there; money being able to raise the basest and unworthiest to the highest promotions: the cardinals are also named either upon the interests of princes, and chiefly of the two great crowns, or to make the pope's nephews have a greater stroke in the next conclave, or upon some such carnal account. And perhaps, for good manners' sake, a scholar, or a person famous for devotion, may get a red hat; but such are always the least esteemed in the college, all affairs being governed by the pope's nephews, or the protectors of the crowns. And who shall expect that such a company of secular, ignorant, (I mean in matters of religion,) and oftentimes licentious men, should be the great sanhedrim, by whose advice all that belongs to religion must be managed? These must be likewise the electors of the pope, when the see is vacant; whom they choose out of their own number, who is always elected by the prevailing interests of one of the crowns, or by the faction of the former pope's nephews. And what caballings, what bespeaking of suffrages, and what impudent *ambitus* is commonly practised in the elections of popes, is well enough known; nor can it be denied. Now, what man of common sense can imagine, that a pope thus elected by simoniacal arts and carnal interests, can be Christ's vicar on earth, or have the Holy Ghost always affixed to his chair, that he shall never err in any of his decrees? Truly, he that can believe this, may believe any thing that is gross and absurd. Is not the whole frame and contrivance of that court turned so entirely secular, that not a vestige of the character of a church, or of churchmen, remains? And to this shall I add all the splendour of their apparel, the state of their processions, and the ceremonies of their coronation, and how they wear a triple crown? which being so well known to all who ever were at Rome, need not be descanted on by me. From this I should descend to the cardinals, bishops, and abbots, and shew how secular they are become; all their design being to engross power, and monopolize all riches; which contagion is also derived into the inferior orders of the clergy, who, by the magnifying of their

images, saints, and relics, use all the arts they can devise for enriching of themselves and their friends. And even those orders that pretend to mortification and abandoning the world, and talk of nothing but their poor and austere manner of life, yet have possessed themselves of no small part of the riches and glory of the world. It is true, there is a young brotherhood among them, which, though the youngest, yet hath outstripped the elder, and made them stoop to it, and serve it. And what base and sordid ways that society hath pursued, for arriving at the highest pitch of greatness and riches, and how successfully they have managed their designs, is sufficiently cleared, what through the zeal of some of the honester of that communion, what through the envy of other emulating orders! All these things do fully prove how unlike that church is to the poor and pure simplicity of Christ and his apostles, and of the first ages of the church.

If we further examine the characters of evangelical purity, we have them from the mouth of our Saviour, when he commands us to learn of him, *for he was meek and lowly in heart;* and he made it the distinguishing badge of his disciples, that *they loved one another.* Now for humility, it is true the head of that church calls himself "the servant of the servants of God;" but how far such humility is from his design, his aspiring pretences do loudly declare. All the world must stoop to him: not only must his fellow-bishops swear obedience to him, and become his vassals, but the kings of the earth must be his footstool, and all must pay him that servile homage of kissing his foot; an ambition as insolent as extravagant. His power must be magnified with the most blasphemous titles of his being *God, our Lord God on earth omnipotent;* with a great deal more of such servile adulations offered to him from the parasites of that court. In a word, a great part of that religion, when rightly considered, will be found on design contrived and abetted for exalting him to the highest degrees of insolence: but so many proofs of this were already upon other occasions hinted, that it is needless to go over them again, and that same leaven leavens the whole lump of their clergy; who all pretend, that by their ecclesiastical character they are only subject to their head, and so enjoy an immunity from the civil authority, be their crimes what they may be. And an inroad

on this pretence of late, from the state of Venice, when they seized two churchmen that were highly guilty, drew out so much of their most holy father's indignation, that he thundered against them; and finding the weakness of the spiritual sword, resolved to try the edge of his temporal one upon them, in patrociny, partly of these villains, and partly of the covetousness of the clergy, to which the senate had set a small limit by a decree; but finding they were like to prove too hard for him, he was willing to put up his sword, rather than to kill and eat, as one of his cardinals advised him.

Shall I with this also tell the instances of the ambition of cardinals, who from their first original of being presbyters of Rome, have risen up to the height of counting themselves the companions of kings, and in their habits affect a princely splendour? Shall I next shew to what a height of pride the exaltation of the priestly dignity among them hath risen? as if it were equal, nay, preferable to the condition of princes. The priest giving absolution, is a sure device to make his power be much accounted of, since he can forgive sin. The gorgeous and rich apparel they wear in worship, serves also to set off their dignity. And what a goodly device is it, that their spittle must make one of the sacred rites in baptism! Their engrossing the cup to themselves from the people, was another trick for raising their esteem: but above all things, their power of transmuting the substance of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, by uttering five words, was a marvellous device to make all the world admire them, who can so easily, and every day, work a miracle, compared to which, all the miracles of the gospel may pass for ordinary actions. What a great piece of wonder must such a man be held to be, who can thus exercise his authority over the very person of Jesus Christ, notwithstanding of all the glory to which he is now exalted! And it was no contemptible engine for that same design, to possess the people with a belief of the priests offering in the mass an expiatory sacrifice for the sins both of the dead and living; which proved a stock for them to trade on, both for their ambition and covetousness: and from these evidences we may infer how little of the humility of Christ appears in that church, from the highest to the lowest.

The next branch of the evangelical spirit is, meekness and

charity; which leads me unto the consideration of the fourth design of the Christian religion, which was the uniting of mankind under one head, and into one body; and this is designed to effectuate, not only by these sublime precepts of the highest love, and the utmost extent of the pardoning of injuries, and of returning them with the best offices of love and prayer, which the blessed Author of our faith did enact, but by the associating of the faithful into one society, called *the church;* which was to be united with the closest bonds of brotherly love and charity, and was to be governed by pastors and teachers, who should *feed the flock with the sincere milk of the word;* and was also to be cemented together by the ligaments of the holy sacraments, *by which, as by joints and bands, they are both united to their head, and knit together.* Now we are from these things to consider, what opposition that church we are now considering gives to this branch of the end of Christianity.

And first, whereas the gospel pronounceth us free, and that *we are no more the servants of men, but of God*, if any attempt upon that *liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free*, he changeth the authority of the church into a tyrannical yoke; much more, if all the new articles of belief, and rules for practice, be imposed under the severest certificates. But here we are to consider, that all these things which that church hath imposed on all of her communion, for which we withdraw from her, are additions to our faith; for in this we mainly differ from that church, that whatever we acknowledge they acknowledge likewise, but with a great many additions. We believe the scriptures are a rule for Christians, and they believe the same; but they add traditions, and the authority of the church to the scriptures. We believe that God is to be worshipped spiritually; they believe the same, but add, that he may be worshipped by images and sensible figures. We believe Christ to be the Mediator betwixt God and man; they believe the same, but add to this the intercession of saints. We hold that God and Christ are to be worshipped; they hold the same, but add saints and angels to their worship. We believe heaven and hell to be the several states of the future life; they believe the same, but add purgatory betwixt them, to the day of judgment. We believe baptism and the Lord's Supper to be the

sacraments of the new covenant; they believe the same, but add five more. We believe Christ is spiritually and really present in the Lord's Supper; this they believe, but add the unconceivable tenent of his corporal presence. In a word, it might be instanced in many other particulars how they have driven us from their communion by their additions to the truth and sincerity of the gospel, which they have adulterated by their inventions: and not only have they imposed all these things, but thundered out anathemas on all that question them; and have so wreathed all their fopperies with that main and fundamental article of their belief, of the infallibility of their church, that it is impossible to hope for their recovery, till they renounce that principle which is so dear to them. For if their church be infallible, then in no matter of faith or practice can she decree amiss; and therefore the lawfulness and sanctity of all her decrees must be maintained with an equal vigour and zeal; for if in one of them she step aside, her infallibility is for ever gone. And by this we may see to how little purpose it is to treat of accommodating matters with that church, since there is no possibility of our union with them, without we turn over entirely to them: for they cannot part with one of their errors, without they first renounce that which is the dearest of them all: to wit, the unerring authority of their church. How cruel then is that church, which addeth the severe sanction of an anathema to all her decrees, even about the most trifling matters, and about things that are, by their confession, of their own natures indifferent? And a consectary to this is, that cruel opinion they hold, that none can be saved out of their communion; pretending there is no salvation without the true church, which they restrict to those who are under the obedience of the Roman bishop; and this is what they usually frighten all with.

But it is to be considered what the true notion of the church is, that so we may see through this frightful vizard. The church then is a society of Christians united in the same faith, for worshipping of God jointly. And another definition of a church cannot be proved from scripture: for the church being called *the body of Christ*, its union with him as its Head is held forth by the apostle in these words, Col. ii. 19. *The head Christ, from whom the whole body by joints and bonds,*

having nourishment ministered and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God. From which words we see what constitutes a man a member of the true church; which is, first, his union to Christ as his Head, together with a dependance on him for growth and nutriture; and next, his being knit to all others who are thus united to Christ; which is first, the inward union of Divine charity, by which he loves all who cleave to Christ as their head; and next, his associating himself with them in outward visible acts of worship, which every Christian is bound to do, with all that worship God in spirit and truth. But if a society of Christians do visibly swerve from Christ in many great and signal contradictions to the honour due to his person, and to the obedience due to his laws, and do grossly adulterate the worship, so that communion cannot be had with that church, without departing from the head Christ, then it can be no departing from the church to adhere to Christ and his true worship, and to separate from the corruptions which are brought in upon the Christian religion. If then it appear that the church of Rome hath departed from the truth and simplicity of the gospel, in so many great and main points, those who attempted the reforming her to her first purity, and finding that not to be hoped for, did unite among themselves for serving and worshipping God aright, cannot be charged with separation from the true church.

But by that cruel tenent of theirs, they breed up all their children in the greatest uncharitableness imaginable, condemning all who cannot believe their strange doctrines, or concur in their unhallowed worship. Thus they are the schismatics who have departed from the true church, and who force from their communion all who adhere to it: but this cruelty rests not in uncharitable censures, but hath extended itself to as much bloody and barbarous rage as ever sprung from hell; for all the cruelty of the heathen persecutors cannot match the practices of her that hath been so often *drunk with the blood of saints, and of the martyrs of Jesus.* What enraged cruelty appeared against the poor Waldenses, for the separating from their corruptions! How many of all sexes and ages were cruelly butchered down by the procurement of the rulers of that church! And because the Albigenses lived under the protection of princes that favoured them, how did the popes depose

their princes, and instigate other ambitious invaders to seize on their dominions! which to effectuate, a croisade was proclaimed, that had been formerly practised against the enemies of the Christian faith, and heaven was promised to such as went against these poor innocents; whereupon they were killed by thousands, without all mercy. Never was there any who had the zeal or honesty, in these dark ages, to witness against the apostasy of the church, but the pope and clergy used all means to get his zeal rewarded with a fagot. And when the time of reformation came, with what rage and spite did the pope, by his letters and legates, instigate all the princes of Europe to cruelty against them! But as these things were not done in corners, so they are still so fresh in our remembrance, by the copious accounts we have of them, that I need not tell what arts the popes and other ecclesiastics used to set all Germany on fire on this account: nor need I tell the cruelty was exercised in the Netherlands in Charles the Fifth his time, in which more than a hundred thousand are said, by Grotius, to have been butchered on the account of religion. And in his son Philip's time, the duke of Alva did, in a short time, cut down thirty-six thousand. Nor need I tell the cruelties were practised in France for about forty years together; nor of that treacherous massacre, wherein there was an equal mixture of perfidy and cruelty, which, for all that, was entertained at Rome with great joy and applauses. It will be also needless to tell of their cruelty in England in queen Mary's days, which was chiefly managed by the churchmen. And many are yet alive, who remember what enraged cruelty appeared in our neighbour-island against all of our religion; which did not only flow from the fury of an oppressed people, but they were trained, encouraged, and warranted to it by their priests, and the nuncio who came afterwards among them, discovered who was the spring of all their motions. Shall I to this add all the private assassinations committed on that account, which were not only practised, but justified? I might here congest many instances, brother murdering brother on the account of religion. Neither is Clement, a Dominican, his murdering Henry the Third, nor Chastlet's attempt, nor Ravillac's fact on Henry the Fourth, forgotten. Queen Elizabeth's life is full of these attempts, and the blackest of them all was the gunpowder

treason. All which are to be charged on that church, because the doctrine of murdering heretic princes was taught, licensed, printed, and yet not condemned in it. From these hints we may guess how much of the lowly, meek, and charitable spirit is to be found with them. But should I to this add the horrid cruelties exercised in these massacres, I should be almost past belief, had I not undeniable historians for verifying it; but the mildest of them being to be burned alive, we may guess what the more savage have done by their tortures and lingering deaths. Next shall I mention their courts of inquisition, which have been among them, in the hands of churchmen, from the days of their pretended St. Dominick, whose order have been the great instruments of the cruelties of that church, and whose procedure being tied to no forms of equity or justice, is as unjust as unmerciful; persons being haled to their black courts upon bare suspicions or secret informations, without leading of proofs against them, are by torture examined, not only of their own opinions, but of all that are known to them; whose testimony, though drawn from them by cruel torture, will bring the same tortures on all they delate; neither is there any mercy for any whom this court declares heretic, but the civil magistrate must condemn them to the fire. Now what man that considers the meekness of Christ, and the evangelical spirit, can think that church the spouse of Christ, that hath rioted it with such savage rage against thousands of persons, for no other crime, but because they adhered firmly to the gospel of Jesus Christ, and would not consent or concur with these signal and palpable corruptions with which they have adulterated it.

But as, from the constitution of their church, we see their deformity from the gospel rule, so we will next consider their churchmen, and we shall find how far they have strayed from their first original. Churchmen ought to be the guides and pastors of souls. Now how little of this there is among them, we will soon be resolved in. What do the popes about the feeding of souls? When do they preach the gospel, or dispense the sacraments? Alas! it were below the height of his holiness to stoop to such mean offices. Does any vestige of a churchman remain in that court? And do they not directly rule in the spirit of the lords of the Gentiles? And in this the

cardinals, bishops, and abbots do, to their proportion, imitate their most holy father, abandoning wholly the work of the gospel, as if they bore an empty title, or at most were only bound to say mass on some greater holydays; but in all other things do avowedly cast off the care of their flocks. Shall I here tell of the relaxation of all the ancient rules about the offices and duty of churchmen, which these latter ages have invented, and mention how children are made bishops, how they allow of pluralities, non-residences, unions, commendams, gratia expectativas, with a great many more corruptions, which are every day authorized and granted at Rome? And so zealous were they for these, that they struggled hard against the honest attempt of some at Trent, who would have had residence declared of Divine right, and got it, though with much ado, to be laid aside. And thus it is that the bishops and abbots among them do for the most part relinquish their charges, to live at the courts of princes, and insinuate themselves upon all affairs and offices; and swarms of them go to Rome, gaping for preferment there. I deny not but even these late ages have produced great men among them, who seem to have designed the reviving of the ancient discipline, both among the clergy and the people; but as these instances are rare, so they were hated and persecuted at Rome for their zeal; witness the condemning of Arnold's book of frequent communion, and the severity Jansenius and the abbot of St. Cyran, with their followers, have met with. And thus whatever individuals that church may have produced, yet the corruptions I have hinted are notoriously, publicly, and generally practised in it, and nowhere so avowedly as at the court of Rome. But to compensate this defect of the superior clergy, they have swarms of the inferior ranks every where, both secular and regular, who seem to mind the care of souls very seriously. But not to reflect again upon any thing that hath been hitherto said of their bad conduct of souls, I shall now only take notice of the authority they pretend to, as if the people were bound blindly to follow their confessors' direction, as the voice of God, which clearly makes them the servants of men, and subjects them to the heaviest yoke, which is most directly contrary to *the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free:* and what a wrack to souls have they made confession! And

what an engine to get into the secrets of all the world, and to bring mankind under their subjection, is obvious enough to any that considers it: and to enforce it the more, as they teach it simply necessary to salvation, so the authority they made the world believe the priests were vested with for pardoning sin, together with their easy pardons and slight penances, did root it deep in the hearts of all that communion.

But I go next to examine the sacraments; of which so much being said already, little remains to be added. By their dividing the cup from the bread, they destroy Christ's institution, and so make it no sacrament; and the hearing of mass without communicating, though it make up the greatest part of their worship, yet is purely a service of their own devising, without warrant from Christ's institution, who said, *Take, eat, this is my body;* thereby shewing he intended the virtue and benefit of that ordinance only for those who received it. And, in a word, let any read and compare the institution of the Lord's Supper, as it is in the three Gospels, and the Epistle to the Corinthians, together with the whole Office of the Mass, as it is in the Roman church, and then let him on his conscience pass his verdict whether they have adhered to or departed from Christ's institution in that piece of their worship. Finally, one great end of all solemn worship being the communion of saints, in their joint adorations, and mutual concurrence in divine services; what union can they have with God? or, what communion can they hold one with another, who perform all their worship in an unknown tongue, which is the rule and constant practice of that church beyond sea? though for the better venting of their sophisticated stuff among us, they give the people books of devotion in their vulgar language, yet continue to say the Office of the Mass in Latin.

And thus far I have run around that great circle I proposed to myself in the beginning of this discourse; and have examined the chief designs of the Christian religion, and have found the great and evident contradictions given to them in all their branches by the established and authorized doctrines and practices of that church; in which I have fully justified the Wise Man's observation, that *he who increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow;* and have said enough to evince to all rational and considering minds, how unsafe it is for any that would keep

a good conscience to hold communion with them. But I have not finished my design, till I likewise examine the characters of the Christian religion, and compare them with those that are to be found in the synagogue of Rome.

The first character of our faith is, that it was delivered to the world by men sent of God, and divinely inspired, who proved their mission by miracles. Now these doctrines, about which we differ from that church, can pretend to no such divine original. Let them tell us what inspired man did first teach the worship of images, of the mass, of angels and saints, and of relics; what man sent of God was the first author of the belief of the corporal presence, of the sacrifice of the mass, of the pope's supremacy, of purgatory, of indulgences, and of all these innumerable superstitions, of which the scripture is absolutely silent; for if these doctrines were not the offspring of revelation, they are none of the oracles of God, nor can we be obliged to believe them as such. It is true, they vouch scriptures for proof to some of these; but these are so far stretched, that their sure retreat is in the sanctuary of the church's traditions; but till a clear warrant be produced for proving it was impossible that any falsehood could have that way crept into the world, we must be excused from believing these. Neither is it possible to know what traditions came from the apostles; for as the vulgar are not capable of pursuing the inquiry, so the loss of most of the writings of the first two ages, makes it impossible to know what traditions came from the apostles.

But this I say not, that we need fear the trial; for the silence of the first and purest ages about these things which are controverted among us, is evidence enough that they were not known to them; especially since in their apologies which they wrote to the heathens for their religion and worship, wherein they give an abstract of their doctrines, and a rubric of their worship, they never once mention these great evils, for which we now accuse that church. It is true, a late ingenious writer, whose sincere zeal and candour had much offended the Roman court, and drawn censures on himself and his book, took a way to repair his reputation by a new method of proving the truth of the opinions held in the Roman church; which was, that since the present church held them, that shews

that they had them so from their ancestors, and they from theirs, till you run backwards to the days of the apostles; alleging, that a change in the worship was unpracticable, since it could not be done in a corner, but in the view of all the world, who, it is not to be imagined, were capable of suffering any great or considerable change to be made in that which was daily in their view, and much in their esteem; therefore he concludes, that every generation adhered to that belief in which they were born, and so no change in any great substantial and visible part of worship could be made. It is true, he applies this only to the belief of the corporal presence, which he attempts to prove could never have been introduced into the church, had it not been conveyed down from the apostles. He hath indeed set off this with all the beauties of wit, and elegancies of style, and much profound reading. But with how great and eminent advantages, both of reason and learning, this pretence hath been baffled, I leave it to the judgment of all who have been so happy as to read Mr. Claud his incomparable writings. And the common sense of mankind will prove this but an imposture, how fairly soever adorned; for if we find it certain that any doctrines or main parts of worship are now received into that church; and if, from the undeniable evidences of history, and writings of ancients, it appear that these things were not received in the ancient church; then it is certain there hath been a change made from what was then to what is now, though an ingenious invention may make it appear very difficult to imagine how and when the change came in; especially when it was insensibly and by pieces advanced. If then it be proved, that the fathers believed the elements in the sacrament were really bread and wine, and not changed from their own nature, but only types and figures of the body of Christ, then we are sure a change must have been made, though the ignorance of some ages make it a hard task to clear all particulars about it. It is true, the fathers did highly magnify this sacrament with many expressions, which (though the vehemence of divine rhetoric can well justify, yet) will not bear a logical *examen*; but when they speak in a cooler style, nothing can be more clear than that they believed not the corporal presence. But may not that reasoning of the impossibility of a change in a worship be as well applied to the

taking the chalice from the people, who in reason should be imagined so tenacious of so great a privilege, that no consideration should have obliged them to part with it? And yet we know, nor do they deny, how it was wrung from them about 250 years ago. What may seem less credible than for the people to consent to have their worship in an unknown tongue, and yet we know that all once worshipped in their mother tongue; but that after (by the overthrow of the Roman empire) the Latin tongue decayed, the barbarous worship was obtruded on the world. And what piece of worship is both more visible, and more contrary to the clearest evidence of scriptures, especially to the Commandments, in which the people were always instructed, than the worshipping of images? And though we know well enough, that for the first seven centuries the Christian world abhorred them; yet within a hundred years after that, we find a great part of it bewitched with them. And what can be thought more uneasy for the world to have received, than the pope's absolute authority over all the churches and states of the world? One should think, that though religion and reason had lain out of the way, yet interest and ambition had withstood this; yet we see clearly by what steps they crept up, from being bishops of the imperial city, in an equality of power with their neighbouring bishops, into that culminating height, to which they have now mounted. In a word, we refuse not to appeal to the first four ages of the church, in these matters that we quarrel the Roman church for: we deny not but human infirmity began soon to appear in the church, and a care to gain on the heathens made them quickly fall upon some rites, and use some terms, which after-ages corrupted. But the ruin of religion was, when the Roman empire being overturned by the incursion of the northern nations, in the beginning of the fifth century, both piety and religion being laid to sleep, instead of the primitive simplicity of the faith and worship of the Christians, they turned all their zeal to the adorning of the outwards of religion; and hence the corruptions of the church took their rise.

But I had almost forgot to name some revelations which that church pretends to, even for some of her most doubtful opinions; which are, the visions and extraordinary inspirations of some of their saints, from which they vouch a Divine con-

firmation to their doctrines. I confess there is a great deal of extraordinary visions, raptures, and ecstasies to be met with among the lives of their saints; and I fear a great deal more than truth: for really whoso will but read these writings, he must confess they are so far from being probable or well contrived, that they speak out their forgery. Alas! whereas St. Paul, being put to glory of visions and revelations, was forced to run back fourteen years for one; their saints are found in them every day. Are they not very credible stories they tell of Christ's appearing to some of their she-saints, and kissing them, giving them rings, being married to them, and celebrating nuptial rites, making them drink out of his side, and leaving on them the prints of his wounds, with many other such like apparitions of the Virgin, and other saints, which are either forgeries, dreams, or the effects of melancholy, or hysterical distempers? And yet these extravagant fables are given out to the people as sacred pieces of Divine revelations.

But the inspiration of the holy writers, on which we found our faith, was proved by their miracles which they wrought publicly in the sight of many, and in the presence of their adversaries, many of whom were convinced by them; and it is certain, that whosoever offers any thing to another's belief, pretending he comes to him in the name of God, must have some evident proof of his Divine mission, since none are bound to believe him barely on his own testimony, otherwise there should be no end of impostures, if every pretender to Divine inspiration were to be believed without proof. Now the way it must be proved is, by some evidence of God's extraordinary assisting such a person, which appeared always either in prophecies or miracles, but chiefly in miracles under the New Testament; and therefore both Christ and his apostles appeal to the mighty works they wrought, as the great confirmation of their doctrine. If then there be new doctrines brought into the church, they must have the like confirmation, otherwise they are not to be believed.

But here those of that church think they triumph; for miracles they have in abundance: not a relic they have, but hath wrought mighty wonders; nor a country saint, but the curate of the place can gravely tell a great many deeds of his puissance: nor want the images their marvellous achievements;

but wondrously wondrous are the feats the hostie hath performed. Here I am upon a sad subject of that trade of lies and fictions, wherewith the merchants of that Babylon have so long trafficked; of which the sincere among themselves are ashamed. How ridiculous are many of their miraculous narrations! Was it not a worthy piece of the angelical ministration, for angels to go trotting over sea and land with a load of timber and stones of the Virgin's house, till at length they set it down at Loretto, that great devotions might be shewn to it? It is a goodly story for to tell of a saint, that walked so far after his head was cut off, with it in his arms, resting in some places to draw breath; yet he will pass for an infidel that should doubt of this at St. Dennis' church. Who can look on the lives of the late saints of that church without nausea? Gregory's Dialogues begun this trade, which indeed hath thriven well since. The miracles of the Christian faith were grave and solemn actions; but what ridiculous scenical stories, not to say blasphemous ones, meet us about the miracles of their saints! He that would know this, may read the lives of St. Francis and St. Dominic, St. Bridgit and the two St. Catharines, and he will be satisfied to a surfeit. The miracles also of Christ and his apostles were acted publicly, in the view of all; but most of these narrations of their wonders were transacted in corners, none being witnesses but persons concerned to own the cheat. And the doctrine of equivocating was a good cordial for the ease of their consciences, though they swore what they knew false, according to the natural sense of the words which they uttered. Thus we have many fables of Christ's appearing in the hostie, sometimes as a child, and sometimes as crucified, when but a very few of the whole company present were honoured with that amazing sight.

Further, the miracles of the Christian faith were written in the times in which they were acted, that so inquiries might have been made into their falsehood; and the powers that then governed being enemies to the faith, it was safe for its opposers to have proved and discovered their forgery, had they been such. But many of the miracles of Rome are not heard of till some ages, at least years be past, whereby they are secure from the after-game of a discovery; and he were a stout man that would adventure to question the verity of these pre-

tences at Rome, where it is the interest of that church to have them all believed, without once questioning them. But how comes it, that in heretical countries, (as they call them,) where there is more need of those miracles, and where they might be more irrefragably proved, if true, since the examiners of them were not to be suspected, yet none of these mighty works do shew themselves forth? Certainly, that they are to this day so rife in Italy and Spain, and so scant in Britain, is a shrewd ground to apprehend legerdemain and forgery in the accounts we get of their later saints. And indeed the contrivers of these stories have not managed their design by half so well as need was; for they have bestowed as many of them on one person, as might have sainted the half of an order. But the gain that is made by new saints and new relics is well enough known, not to speak of the general advantage that church pretends to draw from it.

In fine, though some things among them did seem to surpass the known powers of nature, these ought not to prevail upon us for departing from the truth; since *though an angel from heaven preached another gospel, he is to be accursed,* Gal. i. 8. If then they have so changed the Christian doctrine by their additions and inventions, that it is become thereby as another gospel, none of the seemingly seraphical appearances they may have among them, though true, ought to reconcile us to it; and that the rather, since we are expressly guarded against this imposture by St. Paul, who gave it as an indication of the son of perdition, that *his coming was after the power of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness,* 2 Thess. ii. 9, 10. And it is part of their curse, that they are given up to strong delusions, to believe lies. The beast also that appeared to St. John, Rev. xiii. 13, *did great wonders, so that he made fire come down from heaven, in the sight of men, and deceived many that dwelt on the earth by these miracles which he had power to do.* But to conclude this, my greatest quarrel at these forgeries of miracles is, that the people being taught to believe them, and the miracles of the gospel, with an equal certainty, since they have the testimony of the church for both; and they seeing such evident characters of fraud and forgery on these supposed miracles, whereby they are

convinced of their falsehood, are thereby in danger of suspecting all the miracles of the gospel as the tricks of subdolous and crafty men; whereby they run headlong to an atheistical believing the truth of all alike. And thus far we have found how opposite that church is to the spouse of Christ, since her doctrines are so ill founded, and look so like cunningly devised fables, without the authority of Divine inspiration, or the proof of true miracles.

The next character of our faith is, its perspicuity and simplicity, all being called to the clear light of the day in it, and every part of it being so genuine, that it is apparent it was not the contrivance of designing men, that, by the belief of it, they might obtain the power, and possess the riches of the world: and therefore there are no secret doctrines in our faith, which must be kept up from the vulgar, whereby the pastors of Christendom may have dominion over their souls. But what must we conclude of them, who by all means study to keep all of their communion ignorant, as if devotion were thereby nourished; and allow them not the use of the scriptures in their mother tongue, nor a worship which they can understand, whereby it is that they who *occupy the room of unlearned cannot say Amen at the giving thanks, since they understand not what is said.* To this might be added their implicit faith to all the doctrines of the church, without further inquiries; and their blind obedience to the confessarius, be he never so ignorant and carnal. These are certainly darkening opinions and practices, and far different from the methods of the apostles in preaching the gospel, who withheld from the people nothing of the counsel of God, and studied the enlightening their understandings, as well as the enlivening of their wills.

But further, how much of interest appears in the doctrines of Rome, which tend to the exalting or enriching the papacy and inferior clergy; for it is visible what a trade they drive by them: and all the contrivances, all the projectors in Europe ever fell upon for enriching their master's treasury, fall short of the projects of purgatory, the treasure of the church, indulgences, and the pope's absolute authority, in making, abrogating, and dispensing with all positive laws. Neither is there more of design to be found in the Alcoran, than in the mysteries of that caliph of the spiritual Babylon. And we may

guess of their concernedness in these matters, since a gentler censure may be hoped for upon the violation of the greatest of the laws of God, than upon the least contradiction to their idolized interest. The one is the constant subject of their studies and sermons, whereas the other is seldom minded.

The third character of our faith is, that it is rational and suitable to our souls, God having fitted it, and framed them so harmoniously, that they are congenial one to another. It is true, the mysteries about God and Christ are exalted above the reach of our faculties, but even reason itself teacheth that it must be so, since if there be a God, he must be infinite and incomprehensible; and therefore it is not to be wondered if the scriptures offer some mysteries to us about God and Christ, which choke and stifle the impressions we are apt to take of things. But in these it is visible that the object is so disproportioned to our faculties, that it is impossible we can reach or comprehend it; but as for the other parts of religion, they are all so distinctly plain, that the reasonableness, as well as the authority of them, serve to commend them to us: but how void are they of this, who have made one of the chief articles of their faith, and the greatest matter of their worship, that which is not only beyond, but contrary to, the most common impressions of nature, which teacheth us to believe our senses when under no lesion, and duly applied to a proper object. For indeed, in that case, we cannot really doubt but things are as they appear to us; for we cannot believe it midnight, when we clearly see the sun in the meridian; nay, and our faith rests on the evidences our senses give, since we believe, because miracles were clearly seen by these who first received the faith: and Christ said, *Believe me for the very works' sake*, John xiv. 11. And so their sight of these works was a certain ground for their belief; therefore the senses unvitiated, fixing on a proper object, through a due mean, are infallible; therefore what our sight, our taste, and our touch tell us is bread and wine, must be so still, and cannot be imagined to have changed its substance upon the recital of the five words. Shall I add to this that throng of absurdities which crowd about this opinion? For if it be true, then a body may be in more places at once, triumphing in glory in one, and sacrificed in a thousand other places: and a large body may be crowded into

the narrow space of a thin wafer, they holding it to be not only wholly in the whole wafer, but also entirely in every crumb of it: a body can be without dimensions, and accidents without a subject: these must be confessed to be among the highest of inconceivables; and yet these miracles must be believed to be produced every day, in above a hundred thousand places. Certainly he hath a sturdy belief who can swallow down all these absurdities, without choking on them.

It is little less inconceivable to imagine, that a man of no eximious sanctity, (nay, perhaps of noted impiety,) nor extraordinary knowing (nay, perhaps grossly ignorant) in theological matters, shall have the Holy Ghost so absolutely at his command, that whatever he decrees must be the dictates of the Spirit. And what an unconceivable mystery is the treasure of the church, and the pope's authority to dispense it as he will! No less inconceivable is the efficacy of the sacraments, by the work wrought; nor is any thing more affronting to reason than the barbarous worship. And of a piece with this is the blind subjection pleaded for the confessarius his injunctions, and their opinions of expiating their sins by a company of little trifling penances, which tend not to the cleansing the soul, nor killing of the life of sin, much less can be able to appease God, either of their own inbred worth, or by reason of any value God is pleased to set on them, either by command or promise. But should I reckon up every thing among them that chokes reason, I should dwell too long on this, and reckon over most of the things that have been through the whole discourse hinted, which seem to stand in the most diametrical opposition to the clearest impressions of all men's reason.

But to bring my inquiry to an issue. Easiness and gentleness are by Christ applied to his yoke, laws, and burden; and whatever opposition or trouble they may give to the carnal man, by mortifying his lusts, and contradicting all his inordinate and unlimited desires, yet by the rational faculties and powers they are both easily understood and practised. Indeed, religion lies in few things, and its chief work is the reforming and purifying the inward man, where it mainly dwells and exerts its force and virtue; but these who have added so much, both to be believed and done, beyond what our Lord prescribed, as they accuse his unfaithfulness, so bring unsup-

portable burdens on the consciences of Christians. These therefore who lead out the mind, by presenting a great many foreign objects to it, do introduce superannuated Judaism, instead of that liberty Christ brought with him into the world. But shall I number up here all the impositions of that church, whose numbers are great as well as their nature grievous? for it is a study to know them all: but what a pain must it be to perform them! It is a work which will take up a great deal of time to understand the rubrics of their missals, breviaries, rituals, and pontificals. In a word, they have left the purity and simplicity of religion, and set up instead of it a lifeless heap of ordinances, which must oppress, but cannot relieve the consciences of their disciples.

Shall I add to this the severity of some of their orders, into which, by unalterable vows, they are engaged their whole lives? Now whatever fitness might be in such discipline, upon occasions for beating down the body or humbling the mind, yet it must be very tyrannical to bind the perpetual observance of these on any by an oath; for thereby all the rest of their lives may become insupportably bitter to them, wherein they stand obliged, under perjury, to the perpetual observance of some severe discipline; which, though at first in a novitious fervour, might have had its good effects on them; yet that drying up, it will afterwards have no other effect but the constant dejecting of the soul, and so their life will be a rack to them by their perpetual toil in these austerities. This I speak of those who seem the chief ornaments of that church, whose devotion doth for the most part turn to outwards, and rests in the strict observance of their rules, not without voluntary assumed mortifications, which they add to them, but wherein they for the most part glory, and so the life of pride and self-love (the subtlest of all our enemies) is fed and nourished by them. Neither can we think that these, whose exercises are so much external, can be so recollected for the inward and serene breathings of the mind after God and Christ, without which all externals, though they seem to make a *fair show in the flesh*, yet are but a skellet of lifeless and insipid things. But indeed they have studied to remove this objection of the uneasiness of their religion, by accommodating it so, that the worst of men may be secure of heaven, and enjoy their lusts

both, according to the corrupt conduct of some of their spiritual fathers. But what I have hinted of the uneasiness of their religion, is taken from the nature of their devotions, in their highest altitude and elevation.

And thus far I have pursued my design, in the tract whereof I have not been void of a great deal of pain and sorrow: for what pleasure can any find by discovering so much wickedness, and so many errors in the christened regions of the world; and see the holy and beautiful places, wherein the former ages worshipped God in the spirit, turned to be habitations of idols and graven images, by which God is provoked to jealousy. God is my witness how these thoughts have entertained me with horror and regret all the while I have considered them; and that I am so far from being glad that I have found so much corruption in the Roman church, that it is not without the greatest antipathy to my nature imaginable that I have paid this duty to truth, by asserting it with the discovery of so many impostures, which have so long abused the Christian world; and if any heat or warmth hath slipped from my pen, I must protest sincerely it is not the effect of anger or passion, but of a tender and zealous compassion for those souls, who are either already blinded with these delusions, or do incline towards *those paths which lead to the chambers of death.*

I am none of those who justify rage or bitterness against those in errors; for if we had the Spirit of Christ in us, we should mourn over and lament their misery, who lie under so much darkness. And this is a sure character to judge if our zeal for God and his truth be divine and evangelical, if it makes us pour out rivers of tears for those that have gone out of the way, rather than streams of fire against them. That zeal which raiseth melting sorrow, tender compassion, and fervent prayers for those we see erring, is Christ-like, and worthy of that meek and charitable spirit which the gospel so much recommends: whereas that which boils into rage and foam against such as err, and designs their ruin and mischief, and studies how to persecute rather than convert them, and kindles in men a bitter aversion to their persons, together with rude harshness in their behaviour to them, is all antichristian and carnal. My design therefore in this discourse is to provoke pity rather

than wrath, and tears more than flames, towards those deceived multitudes, that we may pray for them, rather than rail at them.

But my chief aim is to persuade all who love their souls, to consider the danger of continuing in the communion of a church, that hath not only fallen from her first love and purity, but hath in so many great and essential points corrupted our most holy faith, and adulterated the pure sincerity of our worship.

I shall not here search into the depths of the mercies of God, how far they may reach any of that communion, nor examine how far they hold the foundation Christ, notwithstanding of all the base superstructures they have reared upon it; nor shall I consider how far invincible ignorance may excuse the guilt of an error, nor how applicable this may be to them; nor shall I discuss how far the private differing from these errors may in many things secure some of the individuals of that communion from the general guilt that lies over them: upon all particulars many things may be said, and none alive is more willing to stretch his invention for finding out grounds to fix his charity on than myself. But all I can devise falls short of a full and satisfying excuse for those, who, being educated in the knowledge of the truth and sincerity of the gospel, do fall away into the errors and superstitions of that church; nor can I imagine what their temptations should be to it, except one of two: the first is, that they desire a sensible religion, and therefore loathe the simplicity and spirituality of the gospel, and love to have some glorious objects in worship to strike on, and affect their senses; but however this may make impressions on the grosser rabble, yet certainly any that considers that the perfection of man lies in his reason, and not in his outward senses, and that the exaltation of reason is religion; he must confess, that the less it dwells in the senses, and the more inward it becomes on the reason, it is the more suitable both to the nature of God, of religion, and of the rational faculties. But the other consideration that may draw many to that religion is yet worse, which is, because in it a great allowance is given to all manner of sin, by the treacherous conduct of some confessors, who persuade men of heaven, on terms very easy and pleasing to flesh and blood. And hence it is

that we see very few who have expressed any affection to a devout life, abandoning us to go over to the Roman communion, most of those who do so (except it be one of a thousand) being as void of virtue, as ignorant of the nature of true religion; that we may say, 1 John ii. 19, *They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they had not gone out from us.*

These being the only visible temptations to entice any from our communion to theirs, it is hard to preserve any great degrees of charity for them: for a third temptation being that only which can work on a devout mind, takes with so few among us, that I need scarce name it; which is, the solitary and retired houses among them for leading a devout and strict life, and the excellent books of devotion that have been published by many of that communion. This I know wrought mightily on one, and made him many times wish that he could, with a good conscience, throw himself into one of these religious houses; but the consideration of these great corruptions lay so in his way, that without the doing the greatest force on his conscience imaginable, and thereby securing to himself damnation by complying with things he judged so damnable, he durst not do it. Yet, for his further satisfaction, he went among them, to see if their worship appeared more amiable in practice than it did in writings; but I have heard him often declare, that though his mind was as free of prepossessions as perhaps ever man's was, yet all he conceived of them, even from the writings of their adversaries, was nothing compared to the impressions which the sight of their worship left upon him, it appearing so histrionical in all its circumstances, and so idolatrous in its substance, especially as he saw the vulgar practise it. And for their religious houses, he was among a great many of all orders, but was far from meeting with that spirit of devotion he had hoped to find among them: for they always magnified their order, and the little external austerities and devotions of it; but for genuine humility, a delight in God and Christ, abstraction from the world, (for all their frocks and retirements,) sincere heavenly-mindedness, and fervent charity to the brethren, he regretted he had met with little of it among them: and that he found the several orders full of emulation and envy at other orders, and of heats among

themselves, which made him see, that he who meant to lead a devout life, must choose another sanctuary than any of these he saw in that communion.

I deny not that it is the greatest defect of the reformation, that there are not in it such encouragements to a devout life; though the entanglements of vows to things without our power, is a manifest invasion of the Christian liberty; and to languish out one's life in a tract of lazy devotion, without studying to serve God in our generation, seems contrary to the intendment of religion, a great many of its precepts being about those duties we owe our neighbours: yet for all this, it is not to be denied to be a great defect, that we want recluse houses, for a stricter training up of those who design to lead a spiritual life, and to serve in the gospel, that their minds being rightly formed before their first setting out, they may be well qualified and furnished for their work. Such houses might also be retreating places for old persons, after they had served their generation, and were no more able to undergo toil and fatigue: they might be also sanctuaries for devout persons, in times of their greater afflictions or devotions. But for all this want, it fixeth no imputation on our church, her doctrine or worship, that she is so poor as not to be able to maintain such seminaries. But by the way, it is no great character of the piety of their church, that she abounds so with great and rich donations, when we consider the arts they have used for acquiring them, by making people believe themselves secure of heaven by such donations: indeed, had we got our people befooled into such persuasions, the cheat might have prospered as well in our hands; but we are not of those *who handle the word of God deceitfully;* nor will we draw the people even to do good with a crafty guile, or *lie for God.*

But now, as a conclusion to this discourse, I must consider if all things among us be so sound and well-grounded, that with a quiet mind and good conscience every one may hold communion with our church, and hope for salvation in it; I shall therefore briefly run over the nature and characters of the Christian faith, to see if any contradiction to them, or any part of them, be found among us. And first of all, we worship God in spirit, as a spiritual being, with suitable adorations, which we direct to no image nor symbol of the Divine pre-

sence, but teach, that we ought not to figure God to any corporeal being, no not in our thoughts; neither do we worship any beside God the Father, Son, and Spirit: we also worship Christ, but as he is God, and hath the fulness of the Godhead dwelling in him bodily: angels indeed we honour; but knowing them to be our fellow-servants, we cannot pray to them, or fall down before them: we count the holy Virgin *blessed among women*, but dare give her no share of the glory due to her Son: all the saints we reverence and love; but knowing God to be *a jealous God*, we cannot divide that honour among them which is only due to him, and therefore do neither worship them, their images, nor their relics. We desire also to offer up to God such sacrifices as we know are well pleasing to him, prayers, praises, broken and contrite hearts, and our souls and bodies; but reject all charms and enchantments from our worship, as contrary to the *reasonable service which is acceptable to God*, and to retain the genuine simplicity of the gospel worship, in a plain and intelligible style and form, without any mixtures drawn from Judaism and Gentilism. And thus there is nothing among us contrary to the first design of religion.

And as little will be found against the second, which is the honour due to Christ in all his offices. We teach our people to study the scriptures, and to examine all we say by them, and exhort them to depend on God, who by his Spirit will teach them as well as us; neither do we pretend to an authority over their consciences, but acknowledge ourselves men of like infirmities with the people, who are all called to be *a royal priesthood*; and thus we honour Christ's prophetical office, by founding our faith only on the Divine authority of the scriptures. We also believe, *there is no name given under heaven by which we can be saved, but the name of Christ*, who laid down his life a ransom for our souls, that *by his cross we might be reconciled to God*; and it is to that one sacrifice that we teach all to fly for obtaining remission of sins, and the favour of God, trusting only to it, and to nothing we have done or can do; knowing that when we have done all we can do, *we are but unprofitable servants*; much less do we hope for any thing from any of our fellow creatures. We apply our souls to no intercessor but Christ, and trust to no satisfaction but his; and

we acknowledge him the only King of his church, whose laws must bind it to the end of the world. Neither do we acknowledge any other authority but his over our consciences. It is true, in things indifferent he hath left a power with his church to determine in those matters which may tend to advance order, edification, peace, and decency; but as the church cannot add to our faith, so neither can it institute new pieces of worship, which shall commend us to God, or bind any load upon our souls. We own a ministerial authority in all the pastors of the church, which they derive from Jesus Christ, and not from any visible head on earth, and therefore they are only subject to Christ. We also hold, that the civil powers are of Christ, whose gospel binds the duty of obedience to them more closely on us; and therefore if they do wrong, we leave them to Christ's tribunal, who set them up, but pretend to no power from his gospel to coerce or resist them; and thus we honour Christ in all his offices, and so are conform to the second branch of the design of our faith.

We also receive the third with the same fidelity; and whatever the practices of too many among us be, yet there is no ground to quarrel our doctrine. We preach repentance to all, and study to convince them of their misery and lost estate, that they may mourn for their sins, and turn to God by a new course of life: we preach faith through Christ in God, as that which unites our souls to him, by which we are in Christ, and Christ is in us. We stir up our people to *love the Lord their God with all their heart, strength, soul, and mind, and to wait for his Son Christ Jesus*, who is *the hope of glory*, and *shall change our vile bodies into the likeness of his glorious body*. And from this great motive do we press our people to the study of *holiness, without which they shall never see God*. We send them to the Ten Commandments for the rule of their lives, whose exposition we chiefly take from Christ's sermon on the mount; neither can we be charged for having taught the people to break one of the least of these Commandments. We exhort all our hearers to make the life of Christ the pattern of theirs, and to learn of him, who was *meek and lowly in heart*. Neither can our church be accused of having taught any carnal doctrines, for gratifying the base interest of the flesh, or for engrossing the power or treasure of the world, the subsist-

ence of our churchmen being but a livelihood, and not a treasure. In a word, *we preach Christ and him crucified*, and all the rules of his gospel, for ordering the conversation aright, without adding or taking from it: and thus our conformity to the third branch of Christianity appears.

We teach also, according to the fourth branch of Christianity, the doctrines of charity: neither do we condemn any who hold the foundation, though in some lesser matters they differ from us, but hope they may be saved as well as we. We abhor the doctrine of cruel persecuting of any for their consciences: the utmost we allow of, or desire of that nature, being the preservation of our own societies pure from the contagion of other traffickers, and the driving from us those who do so disturb us. All the authority we give the church is paternal, and not tyrannical; our churchmen we hold to be the pastors, but not the lords of the flock, who are obliged to feed them sincerely, both by their doctrine, labours, and whole conversation: but we pretend to no blind obedience due to their directions; and count them noble Christians, who search and try all they say by that test of the scriptures: we send the people to confess their sins to God, from whom only we teach them to expect their pardon; and pretend to no other keys, but ministerial ones, over public and known scandals. In our worship, as all do understand it, so every one may join in it. And in the number, use, and simplicity of our sacraments, we have religiously adhered to the rules of the gospel, we holding them to be solemn federal rites of our stipulation with God; in which, if we do worthily partake of them, we are assured of the presence of the Divine Spirit and grace, for uniting our souls more entirely to God, and advancing us in all the ways of the Spirit of life; and if the institution of them in the gospel be compared with our administration of them, it will appear how close we have kept to our rule.

And thus we see how exactly conformable the doctrine of our church is to the whole branches of the Christian design; upon which it is not to be doubted but the characters of the Christian religion will also fit ours. We found our faith only on the scriptures; and though we pay a great deal of venerable esteem to the churches of God during their purity, which continued above four centuries, and so be very willing to be

determined in rituals and matters that are external and indifferent, by their opinions and practices; yet our faith settles only on the word of God, and not on the traditions of men: neither do we believe every spirit that pretends to raptures and visions, but *try the spirits, whether they be of God or not;* and *though an angel should preach to us another gospel, we should hold him accursed.* The miracles we trust to, as the proofs of the truth of that revelation which we believe, are only those contained in the scriptures; and though we believe there was a wonder-working power continued for some time in the church, yet we make a great difference betwixt what we historically credit, and what we religiously believe: neither will we, for supporting our interest or authority, have recourse to that base trade of forging lying wonders; but we rest satisfied with the miracles Christ and his apostles wrought for the proof of the religion we own, since what we believe is no other than what they taught; and therefore we leave the trade of forging new miracles to them who have forged a new religion.

And for the plain genuineness of the gospel, we have not departed a step from it, since we call upon our people by all the motives we can devise, and with all the earnestness we are masters of, to receive full and clear instruction in all the matters of our religion, which we distinctly lay open to them. And nothing of interest or design can be charged on us, who pretend to nothing but to be the *stewards of the mysteries of God;* nor have we offered to sophisticate the simplicity of our worship by any additions to it; for the determining about some particular forms is no addition to worship, but only the following forth of these precepts, of doing all things to edification, peace, and order: but an addition to worship is, when any new piece of Divine service is invented, with a pretence of our being more acceptable to God thereby, or of our receiving grace by that conveyance; and therefore any rites we have, as they are not without some hints from scripture, so we pretend not to become any way acceptable to God by them.

Further, we teach no irrational nor unconceivable doctrine. It is true, there are mysteries in our faith, and even reason itself teacheth that these must be unconceivable; but for all our other persuasions, they are such as may be well made out to the rational faculties of man; therefore we do not betake our-

selves to that sanctuary, that we must be believed, assert what we please; but we assert nothing but what we offer to evince by the clearest proofs. And in fine, we add nothing to the burdensomeness of the laws of Christ, but teach and propose them as we have them from his gospel, without adding, changing, or altering a tittle from the first institution.

And so far have I considered the doctrine and worship of our church; wherein, if I could justify all our practices, as well as I can do our principles, there were no grounds to fear hurt from all the cavils of mortals. But for bad practices, whatsoever matter of regret they may furnish us with, they afford none for separation: therefore there is no ground that can justify a separation from our church, much less warrant the turning over from us to the communion of Rome. And thus far have I pursued my designed inquiry; which was, if with a safe conscience any might adjoin themselves to the popish religion, or if communion with our church was to be kept and continued in; and have found great grounds to assert the evident hazards of the former, so that no man to whom his salvation and welfare is dear, can or ought to join himself to that church: on the other hand, without renting the body of Christ, none can or ought to depart from our churches. But I leave the perusal and considering of these things to the serious reader, to whom I hope they may give some satisfaction, if he bring with him to the inquiry an attentive, serious, and unbiassed mind. And I leave the success of this, and every other attempt of this nature, for the clearing of Divine truth, with Him, who is the only fountain of blessings, who is over all, God blessed for evermore. Amen.

A DISCOURSE

CONCERNING

THE DEVOTIONS

OF

THE CHURCH OF ROME,

ESPECIALLY AS COMPARED WITH THOSE OF

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND;

IN WHICH IT IS SHEWN,

THAT WHATEVER THE ROMANISTS PRETEND, THERE IS NOT SO TRUE DEVOTION AMONG THEM, NOR SUCH RATIONAL PROVISION FOR IT, NOR ENCOURAGEMENT TO IT, AS IN THE CHURCH ESTABLISHED BY LAW AMONG US.

IT is certainly one of the greatest commendations that can be given of any church, or body of Christians, that a man can with truth affirm of it, that the doctrines which they profess, the rules and orders under which they live, that the frame and constitution of the church tendeth directly to make men more pious and devout, more penitent and mortified, more heavenly-minded, and every way of better lives than the way and profession of other Christians; for to work men up to this holy frame and disposition was one of the main designs of the gospel of Christ, which intends to govern men's actions, and reform their temper, as well as to inform their understandings, and direct their belief. And in this particular it differs much from all the ethics of the learned heathen: for whereas they designed especially to exalt the passions, and to raise up the mind above itself, by commending the high and pompous virtues, thereby to stir men up to great designs, and to appear bold and braving in the affairs of this life; the gospel is most frequent in commendation of the humble, lowly, and morti-

fying virtues, which would reduce the mind to itself, and keep men within due bounds, and teach them how to behave themselves towards God, and to live in a due regard to another life.

Now there is scarcely any thing which the church of Rome doth more often urge for herself, or with greater confidence pretend to excel the church of England in, than by endeavouring to persuade, that the frame of their church is more fitted for the exciting of devotion and a good life than ours is. And so they will boast of their severe rules and orders; the austerities of their fasts and penances; the strict and mortified lives; the constancy and incessancy of devotions used among them; and would thence infer, that that must needs be the best religion, or way of serving God, in which these practices are enjoined and observed: that *the tree must needs be good by such excellent fruits;* and that if all other arguments fail, yet they say they have this to shew for themselves, that in their communion there is at least somewhat more like that great self-denial and mortification, so often made necessary under the gospel, than is to be found in the reformed churches, or particularly in the church of England. Now laying aside all disputes concerning points of doctrine in controversy between them and us, in which it hath been abundantly shewn that they err in matters of faith, and that in what they differ from us they differ also from the scripture, and the true church of Christ in all the best ages, I will confine myself to examine their pretence to devotion, where I doubt not but it will sufficiently appear that they are as much deficient also in regularity of practice; that there is not that true foundation laid for such devotion as God accepts, nor that strict provision made for it, nor that real practice of it which they would make us believe; but that even the best which they pretend to, is such as doth by no means befit a truly Christian spirit.

I will discourse in this method:

1. I will instance in the several expressions of devotion, the motives to it, or assistances of it, which the church of Rome pretends to, and on which she is used to magnify herself.

2. I will allege the just exceptions which we have against such their pretences.

3. And then shew that they are so far from encouraging

true devotion, that many things, both in their doctrine and discipline, directly tend to the destruction of it.

4. I will shew what excellent provision is made in the church of England for the due exercise of all the parts of devotion, and what stress is laid on it, and on a good life among us.

First. Though devotion is properly and chiefly in the mind, a due sense of God and religion, yet it is not sufficient if it stop there; for there are certain outward acts which are either in themselves natural and proper expressions, or else are strictly required of us by God, as duties of religion, and evidences of the devout temper of our minds; and these are called *acts of devotion.* And all the commendation that can be given of any church, on account of devotion, must be either that there is a true foundation laid for it in men's minds, or constant provision made for the due exercise of it, all necessary encouragement given to it, and a suitable, strict, and regular practice of it observable among them. And there are several things which are not at all insisted on by us, which they of the church of Rome boast of, as serving to some or all of these purposes, which I shall represent as fairly as I can, that we may see what there is in that church that doth answer such great pretences.

For it is observed, that they of the church of Rome oftentimes, instead of dispute, endeavour to work on our people, and too often prevail, by appealing to matters of practice visible to every one's eye; an argument to which men need not use their reason but their sense; and this will, say they, sufficiently convince any of the excellency of our way. "For here are several things used as instances and expressions of devotion, very acceptable to God, and suitable to a good Christian temper, which are either not at all used in the church of England, or at least not in that degree and measure, and yet all those that are used in the church of England, say they, are used among us; for we not only enjoin, and practise constant use of prayers public and private, together with reading and preaching of the word, sacraments, and whatever is used in the church of England, but we have besides several things which are as well proper expressions of devotion as helps and assistances, which are not used among the protestants."

The principal things which they urge are such as these:

1. They blame the reformation in general, as well as the church of England, for the want of monasteries, and such other religious houses which are so numerous in the popish countries, where holy men and women being shut up, and having bid adieu to the world, live as in heaven, in constant exercise of praising of God night and day, and of praying to him for the church and state, and particular Christians, as well as themselves; and who are not only so beneficial to the world by the constancy of their prayers, but also by their example, putting others in mind of religion and of *doing likewise:* and by the severity of their lives, as to diet, garb, and other circumstances, live in a constant practice of that self-denial which is commanded in scripture, and was so practised by holy men almost from the beginning of Christianity; and are, as it were, constant preachers of holiness and mortification; who, though they do indeed stay here in the world below, yet converse not in it, but are in some sense out of it, and live above it.

2. They sometimes also boast of the extraordinary charity and liberality to all good and holy uses pressed and practised among them, which is but sparingly used, say they, among the protestants; especially their excessive expense and cost in building and endowing monasteries, erecting churches, chapels, and crosses, their so pompous adorning the places dedicated to the worship of God, besides their charitable assistance and relief which they afford to the bodies of the living, and the souls of the dead; and no man can deny but charity is a certain evidence, as well as a great branch and duty of true religion and devotion.

3. Sometimes they glory in the great number of saints commemorated in their church, and dying in the communion of it, and urge them as a forcible example to others, and a mighty incentive to devotion; they think also it redounds much to the honour and commendation of their church to have had such glorious members of it, and twit us, as they think, severely, when they ask us what saints we have of our church, and wonder especially that we should observe so few festivals and holydays; whereas the very many days set apart in their church in memory of their several saints, they think not only afford

proper occasions for all acts of religion, but are a sign of their being less addicted to this world, when so great a part of their time is spent in the service of God, and that piety and devotion are a considerable part of their business and employment.

4. They urge also the multitude of pictures and images of several famous men and women, who have in an eminent manner served and pleased God, and been instrumental in converting the world, as very proper assistances of a man's devotion; instructing some, they being the books of the unlearned, and sensibly affecting and alluring all to the imitation of the persons whom they represent.

5. Sometimes they commend their church for the fastings, and other acts of severity and mortification, used not only by the monks and regulars, but by all sorts of men, according to the rules of their church, on set days of the week or seasons of the year, as well as such austerities as are enjoined by their confessors by way of penance; their going barefoot and bareheaded in processions, their whipping and lashing themselves, their drawing great chains and weights after them, as great and proper instances of self-denial and devotion.

6. They place also a great deal of religion in pilgrimages, which the more devout sort take, and spend their estates, and sometimes their lives in, to Jerusalem, Rome, Loretto, Mount Serrat, to St. Thomas at Canterbury, St. Winefred's Well, or some such other places where some extraordinary person hath lived, or some strange relic is left, or where they reckon God hath, on some occasion or other, wonderfully manifested himself; and they reckon, that the very visiting or kissing these, are either an argument of truly devout minds, or that which will make them so. And their manuals or books which their priests give into the people's hands, do not fail by all the art imaginable to endeavour to screw up men's devotion, even to rapture and ecstasy in commendation of these practices and orders, even as if they would have us believe that there is no true religion and devotion without these, and that where there are these things practised, it is a certain sign that the mind is affected as it ought, and piety flourisheth in the highest degree.

And besides these matters of practice, there are also several doctrines and opinions peculiar to themselves, which they

reckon do naturally tend to the advancement of true devotion. As,

7. Their doctrine concerning the intercession of saints for us, and the advantage of invocation or prayer to them, and that we of the church of England want one of the greatest encouragements to prayer and devotion that can be, who neither own nor make use of these helps, and therefore that we cannot have such hope of success and blessing as they have.

8. Their doctrine concerning the merit of good works and supererogation, is of the same nature, in their esteem: for the more worth you suppose in any action, the greater encouragement is there to the performance of it, and therefore surely it must be a most irresistible motive to devotion, to persuade men that the worth and value of it is such, as that you may by it purchase heaven, not only for yourselves, but for others also.

9. Their belief of purgatory, and of the validity of prayers for the dead, doth naturally tend to excite men to devotion, say they; for here is a greater scope and occasion for our prayers, we may hope to be instrumental to more good, more persons to be relieved and helped by our prayers, than are supposed in the devotions of the church of England.

10. And especially their doctrine and practice of confession, penance, and absolution, they look on as so necessary to devotion, that it is a wonder with them that there should be any show of it where these are not received and practised; for a particular confession of all sins to a priest being so strictly required, they say, is the readiest way to bring men to a sense of, and shame for their sins; and penance being also imposed presently on them, will surely make men to be more afraid of sinning again, when they see it must cost them so dear, and that they may not despair or despond, by reason of the multitude or weight of their former sins, but may be encouraged to strive more earnestly against sin for the future, the priest gives them absolution of what is past, at the same time encouraging their hope, as well as exciting their fear, and endeavouring by the same method both to allure, to force, and to shame men into amendment.

Lastly, They insist much also on the validity of their ordinations, the truth and succession, unity and authority of their

church, and the obedience that is payed to the rules and orders of it, as mighty helps and assistances, and encouragements to devotion; when they are so sure of the sacraments being duly administered, and all other acts of authority rightly performed, when the laws of the church, for the punishment of offenders, are duly executed, and when the church hath power to oblige all to an uniform and regular practice.

All these things, say they, do either encourage and excite men to devotion, or assist, or direct them in the exercise of it, give more room, or afford better occasions for it, or else shew more fully the necessity of such and such parts of it, than what is received and practised in the church of England; and therefore the church of England that wants these, wanteth also much of the occasion, matter, opportunities, and arguments for devotion: so that laying aside all disputes concerning articles of faith, they doubt not but it will be readily granted, that at least they are a more devout people; whatever their belief is, their practice is more agreeable to that self-denial and mortification commanded in scripture; that God is more constantly and reverently served among them than he is among us; that they take more pains, are at more cost and trouble in the worship of God, which they think is an instance of a good religious mind, and will be most secure of God's acceptance.

These are, I think, indeed, the most that they do urge for themselves in this point; and there is something of appearance of truth in all this. Most of these instances are such as may, perhaps, be very taking at first sight with some people, they having a show of regularity, strictness, and severity, or else of being proper helps and assistances of devotion; for men are wont to admire any thing that looks odd or big, especially if others have but the confidence highly to praise and extol it. But if we examine them, we shall find them to fall infinitely short of such specious pretences; some of them to be unlawful, and those that are good in themselves to be some way or other spoiled in the use of them; always they err in some material part or circumstance; and, taken all together, they have nothing in them which evidence any true devout temper, either designed to be wrought by the church, or actually working in the people; much less do they bespeak greater devotion than is required and practised in our church.

For it hath been well observed by the judicious sir Edwin Sandys, that the church of Rome hath so contrived its rules and orders, as rather to comply with, and fit every temper and inclination, good or bad, than to work any real good effect on any. And therefore, as it hath several things which openly agree with, and please the profane and debauched; so it must be granted, that it hath somewhat also to suit with, and gratify the melancholy temper, where the devoutly disposed may find somewhat an agreeable retreat; and therefore one would be apt to suspect that the most strict and severe of their orders were kept up rather out of a politic end, to please and quiet the people, than really to advance true piety to God and devotion. But however, it is plain, that taking the whole frame of that church together, it doth not design to promote serious and true devotion, but only to make a noise and to appear so to do. For when I see the same church, though sometimes seeming to countenance the utmost severity as necessary, yet at other times to give all liberty, and let the reins loose to all kind of debauchery, I have just reason to fear they are not in earnest for religion; for all such irregular heats are a sign of bad principles, or a distempered constitution. Just as if I should see the same person sometimes desperately dissolute and debauched, and at other times intolerably strict and severe, and this interchangeably and often, I shall much question his strictness, whether it be sincere: if his sense of piety were real, it would be more lasting and uniform; and therefore, without breach of charity, I think I may look on him in his greatest severity, rather to act a part on a stage, and to serve a present turn and occasion, than to be really in his mind what such strictness would represent him. And therefore whatever true devotion is in any of that communion, ought to be ascribed to somewhat else, rather than to the constitution of that church: for even those things which they are used to boast most of, which I have mentioned already, we shall easily find to have little that is truly commendable, much that is greatly faulty in them; and if their best things are no better, what are their worst! If the subject of their glory is shameful, what will become of the rest!

2. And therefore I will now shew what we have justly to except against their forementioned pretences to devotion.

1. As for monkery in general, which they boast so much of, calling it *status perfectionis et religiosus*, as if besides the state of men in holy orders, that were a state of perfection, and nothing else worthy the name of religious. We confess, that scarcely as to any thing concerning the externals of religion, doth the church of England distinguish itself from the Romish church so much, as that there is not any provision made, or so much as a supposition of such monasteries, or religious houses, or public places of retirement for devout people, as they are called, being again ever settled among us. For though we are not so rash as utterly to abhor and throw away every thing that at any time had been abused to superstition, yet we are very well contented that monasteries should never be rebuilt among us. For we do not look on the life of monks as any great help to devotion, or an instance of true religion prevailing where they are found, much less that they are necessary in the Christian church.

For it is evident that the first and purest ages of the church did not know any thing of them: almost three centuries passed without any mention of them in ecclesiastical history. Antony and Paul in the Diocletian persecution, being taken notice of as the first of that way. We read indeed of some that did lead a more than ordinary severe course, and denied themselves much of the (perhaps) lawful pleasures of this life, in respect to religion and the other life; but these were not monks, or the modern ascetics; though it hath been the way of the church of Rome, in more instances than this, to impose some new thing on the world, upon the reputation of some good and reverend old name; for the lives of the ancient ascetics, or mortified men, differed much from the present monks of the church of Rome. We find not that they engaged themselves in a solemn vow, distinct from, or above that of their baptism. For whatever their general course of life was, they would take the liberty to break their rule sometimes in order to extraordinary charity, or when an occasion offered itself of doing more good, as is recorded particularly concerning Spyridon, a bishop in Cyprus. Nor do we find that they always continued in the same state of life; but took such a severe course on themselves at some particular times, and on some special occasions, (as the Nazarites of old did,) to hum-

ble, and bring their bodies under, and as St. Paul adviseth the married; but not to continue always so, lest Satan should tempt them; and they reckoned it an higher degree praiseworthy for every act of mortification to be voluntary, than that they should once for all force themselves to it; and therefore still retained a power to themselves, and did vary from this method sometimes, and on occasion would indulge themselves a greater, though still a lawful liberty. They took not on them the vow of poverty, nor placed perfection in beggary, but reckoned every creature of God to be good; and even the outward good things of this life to be *the gift and grace of God*, if they be well employed, according to 1 Pet. iv. 10, and remembered that saying of our blessed Saviour, Acts xx. 35, *It is more blessed to give than to receive*. Nor did they vow what the church of Rome now calls *chastity*, but reckoned themselves as chaste in wedlock; and as for obedience, the third part of the monks' vow, they thought it sufficient to obey the commands of God, and knew not of any other obedience due from them, but only to their governors in church and state, whose lawful commands they reckoned themselves obliged to, in order to the more regular administration of affairs, and the more peaceable government of the world; much less had they any distinct rules to be set up in competition with the laws of God, and urged as necessary to salvation, making even *the commandments of God of none effect*, as many of the monks' rules apparently do, as might be easily made to appear. Such religious men as these there were in the first ages, who practised a stricter devotion than others, that God's name might be the more hallowed by them, the more it was profaned by the rest of the world, and who were more than ordinary instant and constant in prayers for a blessing on the church and state, of which they were members; and by the strictness and severity of their lives, made some amends for the negligence and viciousness of the age in which they lived.

And many such as these, we doubt not, are now among us, who yet utterly dislike the popish monkery. And if by the monastic life all this were done, and nothing else designed, it were justly to be commended: for let men deny themselves as much as they will, and use their Christian liberty to the restraint of themselves by a voluntary self-denial and mortifi-

cation, to keep their bodies under, and thereby get a better temper of mind. But all this will not suffice in the church of Rome; for it is not enough for a man to live so strict and holy a life, unless he enter into a vow particularly to this purpose. Nay, though a man do take on him all these vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience; and though they be made to his bishop or confessor, who one would think were the properest persons in the case, yet still it is not sufficient; he cannot be said to be in this religious state, unless he vow obedience to another kind of spiritual jurisdiction. So that it is neither the living so strictly, nor vowing to live strictly, as the most severe monks; but it is their being of a particular order, and living under such and such rules, that is so meritorious; so that by monkery indeed monkery is encouraged, and some politic and secular designs answered; but the advancement of piety and devotion is not principally designed or intended. But to discourse more distinctly of it:

In a monastic life these three things are especially remarkable;

First, The secluded, and perhaps eremitical way of living which they lead.

Secondly, The constancy and regularity of devotions practised there.

Thirdly, The severity of their rules, and austerity of their lives.

But I must needs say, that there is little of true devotion, that I can discover, in any of these.

First, Their being shut up from the world, or living in deserts, is no very proper instance of their devotion, or agreeable to the design of Christianity.

For a man should converse in the world, else he cannot so well understand it, what is amiss, or wanting in it, nor how even to apply and place the emphasis of his prayers.

A man that lives in a wilderness, or shut up always in a monastery, it is possible that he may keep himself free from the defilements of the world; but yet it must be looked on as much more noble and commendable to converse in the world, and yet to avoid the pollution of it.

And though by such a secluded life he may escape one kind of temptation, yet still he will be at least as liable to the two

others, that arise from the Devil, or his own flesh and temper, as ever. And if he avoid some sins, yet still he will be more subject to others, sourness, moroseness, melancholy, censoriousness, spiritual pride, and other sins of as high a nature as those, which by being shut up from the world, he pretends to avoid. And yet such as these are generally legible and observable in the very looks, conversation, and carriage of monks and hermits.

Indeed retiredness sometimes is an excellent help to the mind, by giving it time to recollect itself, and to reflect on its former miscarriages, and the better to prepare itself for its future encounters in the world. But a man may exceed in the measures and degrees of this, as well as of other conveniences and lawful enjoyments; and so it may become a snare and an evil to him; for the mind will naturally be as much tired with solitude as with business. Besides, that the Devil is always most busy when men are idle; and diversion and recreation is as necessary to most tempers, as health and cheerfulness are; and fits a man even for the duties of religion. For the keeping the mind in a constant bent, though of devotion, will in a short time weaken its spring and dull its edge; and the acts of devotion, in such a mind, will, it is to be feared, be rather a formal piece of drudgery, than a reasonable service. And though we should grant, that by being confined to a monastery a man might better escape the defilements of any kind of sin; yet it must be granted, that he cannot be in so much capacity of doing good in the world, as if he conversed freely with it: and Sozomen[a] quotes it as a most remarkable saying of some of the first monks, that he that abstains from evil, but doth no good, ought to be esteemed a very bad man; and so the commands of scripture enjoin us to take care to do good as well as abstain from evil, else we shall be reckoned among the unprofitable servants. We are sure that public service ought to be preferred before private, the glory of God and the good of men being more advanced by it; and therefore, though that man that lives in a wilderness, and serves God there when he is forced to it by persecution, may hope for a blessing, though he be alone, and neither worshippeth God in public, nor gives

[a] Soz. l. 1. c. 12.

a good example to the world; yet he that runs into a wilderness to be wondered at and admired, and neglects the ordinary and most useful way of serving God, there is too much reason to fear *he hath his reward.* At least, how far soever it may please God to pardon his blind zeal and want of discretion, yet certainly this example of his ought not to be recommended to all as a rule for them to walk by. The first monks, we grant, were very good and pious men, and were compelled to forsake their houses and live in solitude; but it is very unreasonable to make their manner of life a pattern to be followed in the quiet and peaceable ages of the church. For this would be to shew ourselves insensible of the goodness of God to us, in giving us the liberty of serving him freely and openly, and that we dare profess our religion without fear of losing our lives. And for the same reason we should still choose to celebrate the sacrament in an upper room, because our blessed Saviour and his holy apostles did so; and should have our religious assemblies in crypts and vaults under ground, because the first Christians, in times of difficulty and persecution, often durst use no other.

And as the solitude of a monastic life is no proper assistance or expression of true devotion, was not known in the first ages of the church, and afterwards was not taken up of choice but by necessity; so also in the last place I observe, that the gospel of Christ, and the rules of living which are given us by himself, and his holy apostles, never enjoin or suppose any such thing. We are always supposed to live in company and society; and accordingly the precepts of our Saviour and the apostles are adapted to the common cases of men, and the concerns of such as converse freely in the world. And therefore I must needs say, that it hath been very wisely ordered, that there should be new and distinct rules made for those that delight in this solitary and monastic way of life; for they are such a kind of men as the gospel of Christ hath no proper rules for.

Secondly, And I am afraid that there is as little true devotion in their so frequent and constant prayers enjoined and practised in their monasteries, though this be confessedly what is most commendable in their way of life, and is the only way by which they themselves can pretend to do any good in the

world. (If I except those, which are but very few, that work with their hands.)

Praise and prayer is therefore acceptable with God, as it is in the voluntary expression of our souls, a freewill offering and sacrifice which we offer to God, in consideration of his infinite excellences and perfections in himself, his former undeserved goodness to us, and our liableness to him. Now the constant prayers used in their monasteries, in more particulars than one, come short of that true devotion due from men to their Maker. For first, they are, as much as can be, forced on a rational being, and on that account must needs lose much of their worth and acceptableness. The monks are obliged, by the rules of their several orders, to say such and such prayers, and just at such and such times, whatever devotion or intention of mind they have; and they are severely punished if they fail of them. Exactly at midnight, at two or three o'clock in the morning, so very often, and at so very unseasonable times, that many have confessed this strictness of their devotions to be of all the greatest burden of their lives; and yet this they must do in imitation of some holy man of old, who is recorded to have prayed at these hours; whereas these men's devotions are not warm enough to keep them awake when they are at prayer. And therefore these prayers not being the free emanations of their own mind, methinks the praise of them is not so much due to the monks themselves as to the head and founder of their order, who obliged them to such rules.

And their devotion is little more praiseworthy than that of the Jews at Avignon, and several other places, who are once in a week forced to go to church and hear a sermon, (as these monks are,) at least to sit there whilst a sermon is preached, and return home as good Christians as they went thither.

But then they are not only thus strictly obliged to such hours of prayer, for that were somewhat tolerable, they might possibly be intent on their prayers notwithstanding; but they are at the same time taught, that they need only say the words with their mouths, it is not absolutely necessary that their mind should go along with them; and this, together with the other, must needs spoil all true devotion. The frequency and unseasonableness of their prayers will make it very difficult for them to attend as they ought, and their doctrine concerning

the no-necessity of attention at prayers will certainly make them to yield to these difficulties; and so there may be abundance of words said, but no devotion performed.

Besides all this, they have a way of being eased of this trouble of the prayers; for, according to their casuists, it is allowable for a man to get or hire another to say his prayers for him. At least he may be dispensed with by his superior, and this dispensation is good, whether there be a just reason or occasion for it or no, according to an excellent maxim of theirs, *Non ad valorem, sed ad justitiam requiritur causa.*

And if after all this men still will be more than they need strict in their prayers, according to the rules of their orders, they almost constantly offend in the end and design of their devotions. For they do them not so much to benefit the world, or work themselves up to a better temper of mind, but to perform a task imposed on them, and which they have vowed to perform, or especially to merit by their works; for they do not so much as pretend that this strictness in devotion is absolutely necessary for their salvation, (for else why do they not enjoin it to all, seeing all have the same need of salvation?) and therefore the sole end of all this strictness and constancy in prayers is only to get heaven for others. Which opinion, besides that it will mightily discourage men of an ordinary charity from being very intent on what they do, when they are sensible they labour only for another, it countenanceth also a false and dangerous doctrine concerning the merit of good works, and encourageth all vicious practices in other men, who will hope to be saved, though not by their own prayers, yet by the prayers of these holy monks said for them.

So that on many accounts there is little of true devotion to be found in that constant course of prayers said so regularly by the monks and hermits, not to mention several other particulars concerning the frame and language of their prayers, the object or persons worshipped or prayed to, the persons prayed for, and the like, which I may have occasion to mention afterwards; which being put together, do abundantly shew the impropriety and the worthlessness of such devotions.

Thirdly, And as to the austerities of the lives of their monks and nuns, the punishments which they inflict on them-

selves, as they profess, for the sake of religion, by coarse and uneasy garments, scanty food and fare, long and tedious watchings, frequent and cruel whippings and lashings, and other such coarse and harsh treatments, which they use towards their own bodies, I confess I pity them, but can discern little or no true Christian devotion in them.

For all severity to our bodies is not devotion, or any part of that self-denial which the gospel requires; nor is this of theirs, though they pretend it to be for the sake of religion; but their insisting so strictly on it, and valuing themselves so much on it, is of very bad consequence to religion.

All punishment which men inflict on themselves is not religion, nor commendable, nor is the patient bearing of it always a sign of a true Christian temper. Christ hath nowhere told us that he that can fast longest, or endure most lashes, is the best man; but he that governeth himself and his life best. We have strange instances of this insensibleness of pain in many of the worst principles and most profligate consciences: the Devil hath his martyrs as well as God; and if the voluntarily inflicting punishment on themselves be a sign of devotion, the priests of Baal, 1 Kings xviii, must have been a very devout generation of men. Therefore it is not any religious commendation of a man that he can stoutly whip or lash himself, or bear it from another without flinching. Such a man might have made a good gladiator, but seems not so well qualified for a Christian.

Nor is all punishment which men inflict on themselves, and say they do it for the sake of God and religion, always a sign of true devotion: for in other cases it is not men's saying that they design well which will maketheir actions acceptable with God; but it is their doing what he hath commanded, and for the ends which he designed and intended, with which he is well pleased. And it too often happens, that men do actions having a show of sanctity and of great self-denial, which yet are received by God only with a—*Who hath required this at your hands?*

Self-denial indeed is commanded in scripture, and is necessary also to many and excellent purposes, to subdue a man's passions and affections, and to bring him to a right understanding of himself; to put a man in mind of leaving the pleasant things of this world, sensibly to affect him with the con-

dition of those that are in misery, and always want them, and to inure him to bear patiently the adverse things, or whatever it shall please God to lay upon him. It is necessary that a man should have a mind always ready and prepared to lose all for Christ; and therefore he ought often to deny himself somewhat for the sake of Christ, that he may give full proof to himself that his mind is affected as it ought to be: and by voluntary acts of this nature he preserves a power over himself, and is much the more fitted for all the accidents of life, and for the exercise of devotion.

But let a man have a care that he keep within due bounds: he may exceed and transgress both in the measure and in the end and design of such mortification. He exceeds in the measure of it, when he inflicts such severity on himself as shall render him unfit for the service of God, and useless in his place. God delights not in the punishment of his creatures, but desires their good here as far as it is consistent with their greater good hereafter. And though he requires self-denial of us, it is only in such a measure as is for our good, in order to the bettering of our temper, and to cut off the occasions of sin in us. And therefore it is a great fault in any man on this pretence to render his life so uneasy to himself as that he shall not be able to serve God contentedly, cheerfully, and without distraction; as a man may be to blame also for his charity, when without a just occasion he throws or gives away all: for if this course were allowed or followed, the worse people, and they that know least how to use an estate well, would be the richest, and owners of all, and the only persons in authority and power.

And he transgresseth also in the end and design of such severity, when he pretends to merit by it, and hopes to buy heaven (which is the gift of God) with a few lashes or a little money.

And I have too much reason to undervalue and dislike the severity of the monks on both these accounts. They often tie themselves up to such degrees of strictness as are above the measures of a man, and consequently not to the purpose of religion and devotion. And they always design to purchase heaven for themselves or others by the merits of such sufferings; at the same time undervaluing the sufferings of Christ,

and overvaluing their own; and yet making them of less worth in God's esteem, than else they would be, by their own setting so high a price upon them.

And besides all this, their insisting so strictly on these pieces of austerity, and placing such religion and perfection in them, is of very ill consequence to other purposes.

It makes men to acquiesce in the means as the end, to content themselves with having performed their fasts, their number of prayers and lashes, without ever aiming at any reformation and change of temper and practices; than which nothing can be more absurd in itself, or more contrary to the design of Christianity.

It makes men also to esteem this or that kind of meat and drink, condition or course of life, to be unlawful or sinful, which really is not; which doth much harm even to religion: for it disparageth God's creation, and brings an evil report upon the land. It necessarily makes men querulous and censorious; and is the very thing which our Saviour took such pains to correct, and did so often rebuke the Pharisees of his time for.

And this extraordinary pretence to severity brings the persons of such men into esteem, whatever their principles, opinions, and practices otherwise are, and so injures religion. For so ecclesiastical history tells us, that those heretics that have most hurt the church, were such kind of pretended mortified men as Montanus, Pelagius, &c. So that *what do these more than others? Do not even the publicans so?*

And therefore, however praiseworthy the monastic life may have been formerly, and whatever good may have been done by some of that order, yet this is no plea for the monks at this time; for the ancients were very instrumental in converting many to Christianity, but these only live on the spoil of Christians already made so. And considering the present posture of affairs in the world, this monkish way of living is very improper, and the abuses that are made of it in the church of Rome are plainly intolerable, where men are taught to place religion in a certain way and trade of life, rather than in a truly Christian conversation. It strikes at the very foundation of our religion for men to be made to believe, that the living or dying in the habit of this or that severe order of monks will have an

influence on the soul, and give it a better title to heaven. And yet it is too notorious that these things are confidently taught and believed among them.

In short, let men deny themselves as much as they will, for the sake of God and of religion, to humble themselves for their sins, and to keep their bodies and passions under; let them use their Christian liberty to the restraint of themselves, by a voluntary self-denial, as far as they find it necessary or expedient; but for this to be brought into a trade is the most preposterous thing in the world: especially let them have a care of censuring and judging others, who tread not exactly in their steps, or of overvaluing themselves on account of this severe and strict course of life. For it is evident that for the most part it is not religion brings them thither, or any extraordinary love of devotion, but their parents send them thither as a pretty cheap way of providing for their younger children, that so they may be able the more honourably to dispose of the rest agreeably to the grandeur of the family. Therefore, if they will commend the institution of monasteries as a good and frugal way of breeding up of youth, or of providing for a spare child or two, let them do what they will. But it is not to be suffered that when they serve especially or only to such politic ends, yet that they should be boasted of as the best, or only Christian and religious way of life, as if the persons in them were the only religious, and all others secular, and in some measure profane.

Besides, it is very unreasonable for persons to be shut up in monasteries, so as they are, when they are young, and before they can have fully considered what temptations they may have, or how they shall be able to bear and withstand them; and yet if they have but once, though of a sudden, through their own melancholy, or the insinuation of others, taken the vow on themselves, there is ordinarily no revoking or drawing back for ever.

It is very cruel also for persons to be put there without any consideration of their several tempers and circumstances. For instead of benefiting the public, which they pretend, it robbeth the world of many an one that would have been useful to it in an active life and station. And some by their tempers do not need such mortification, as the melancholy and dejected.

Others cannot bear the strictness and confinement, the weak and sickly. And now to force this same course of life on all, or such a number of men, indifferently, is like the cruelty of that tyrant that would make all men of the same length: and the best that can be said in the case is, that the persons who thus confine and shut up their children and relations, are like to the persecutors, who in like manner shut up St. Cyprian; which certainly was cruelty in them, though by so doing they gave him a greater opportunity for private devotion. So that in truth I look on the monasteries, as they are now ordered, to be rather a kind of prisons and places of punishment, than convenient places of retirement, in order to the freer and more undisturbed exercise of religion and devotion. And if I am not mistaken, the church of Rome herself, whatever she pretends, really thinks so of them: for the worst punishment that she inflicts on a priest, for one of the worst of offences, viz. for his violating the seal of confession, is, that he shall be condemned to be shut up in a monastery; and I dare say that he and I agree in thinking that to be a severe punishment, rather than an help to devotion.

Secondly, And if the multitude of monasteries in the church of Rome is no certain sign of devotion flourishing among them, they have little reason to boast of their works of charity: for it is most plain, that the biggest part of their charity is turned this way, to the building and endowing monasteries, and to the encouragement of the monastic way of living.

But besides this, though I am very loath to find fault with any pretence to charity, yet I have too much reason, on many accounts, to think very meanly of all that which is practised in the church of Rome: for whatever hath been given to that church under the name of charity, and is now enjoyed by it, hath, for the most part, been ill gotten, and is as ill employed.

And here I will not treat of the temporal power of the pope himself, and of the several principalities which he stands possessed of in Italy and France; for they cannot be ranged under the head of *charity*, according to my acceptation of the word; though it might be easily made to appear, that they have generally been gotten by unjust and unlawful, or at best by harsh and cruel means, and such as one would not expect

from the successor of St. Peter. But I concern myself with smaller and more private benefactions and gifts, though these are so considerable, that generally a third part, often half, the lands of a country are the propriety of the church. Now all this is gotten chiefly from men that are dying, who can keep their riches no longer, and therefore who do not so much give this from themselves, as from their heirs; and is especially, as it were, to buy heaven; and a man must have a most despicable esteem of heaven, who will not give all the good things of this life, when he can no longer use or enjoy them, for the purchase of it: and what is given from so bad a principle, is commonly applied to as bad a purpose. It is a common observation, that in all the popish countries the poor are the most miserable in the world; and their secular priests too are generally in a sad condition, notwithstanding the infinite riches of that church: and so the regulars only have any considerable advantage by them; and they also, as it were, club together to set up one great man as cardinal or head of their order, in mighty pomp and state; and heap riches and preferments on him till he can hardly bear them. So that one can scarcely suppose so great riches, as that church is in common endowed with, to be gotten into fewer hands, or do less good than it doth amongst them. Let them not therefore boast of their charity, whilst, amidst so great plenty, they suffer the poor to want so extremely; and yet, to make a show, build a fine hospita in two or three of their chief towns: for perhaps nowhere in the world do the rich more exalt themselves, and tyrannize over the poor; nowhere is there a greater inequality of conditions; nowhere is there so much given to the church and charity; and nowhere is the estate of the church engrossed into so few hands, to maintain grandeur, rather than to be a relief to poverty. For the cardinals, above seventy in number, are maintained out of the church revenues, and yet are by their creation equal to kings, and superior to princes. Now if this be charity to have a prodigious revenue for the maintenance of the church and poor, and yet to employ this to the luxury of a few, and to let the rest perish, I will acknowledge the church of Rome to be the most charitable church in the world. And if it be said, that a great deal indeed hath been given to good and truly charitable uses, but is now perhaps

misemployed; I answer, it is possible it may be so, yet still I have some reason to question it; for their doctrines of merit, and of buying souls out of purgatory, &c., are enough to spoil their works of charity, and make them to be rather esteemed a bargain of sale, than a free gift. And yet their donations run commonly in this form: "I give this to such a monastery, for the good of my soul, or of the souls of other persons deceased, or for the honour of such a saint;" but seldom for the good of the poor, the maintenance and support of true piety and religion, or for the glory and honour of God: and yet in my opinion, such as these are the only ends for which a gift ought to be esteemed charitable, or will be accepted by God as such.

But now, on the other side, though the church of England own not either purgatory, or any other of their pickpocket doctrines, yet charity, urged by us from truly Christian principles, hath had more force, and done more good, than all their tricks and devices put together: for so Dr. Willet hath in part shewn; and it might be more fully demonstrated, that in these last 120 or 130 years, since the settling of the reformation among us, there hath been more and greater churches, schools, and hospitals built and endowed, better provision made for the poor, more and better care taken, not only for the maintenance, but especially for the instruction of the ignorant and meaner sort of people; in short, all parts of charity more fully exercised, than can be shewn in any the like number of years since Christianity came into this country. Indeed the general strain of our people's charity runs to the doing more good, and is more properly expressed than theirs is. The papists build monasteries, in which provision is made for a few people to live in idleness and luxury, under pretence of devotion and retirement: ours relieve the sick and needy, (though not regulars,) and think it better charity to preserve a poor family from starving, (of which so many thousands die in popish countries,) than to maintain an idle monk or nun, or to make a present to the Lady at Loretto, or offer candles and tapers to the image or saint of the town in which we live. We, by so bestowing our charity, both honour God, and do good to men. They do neither, but do homage to a saint that neither knows them, nor receives any good by the honour which they give him.

It is indeed confessed, that our churches are not so adorned as they ought sometimes: but that is no fault of our church, but of the iniquity of the times, and of those dissensions which they raise among us; but generally they are decently grave, and as well fitted to assist a devout mind without distraction, as can be. We love to have our churches neat and handsome, to shew we do not grudge whatever may be required to make them, in some measure, fit places for Divine worship: but we see not any necessity of having them so splendidly rich and fine: we think it would rather divert men's minds from the business of the place, than assist them in the duties of it.

In short, in no part of charity can they pretend to exceed us, considering our circumstances, unless it be in that of prayer for the dead, when they hire so many masses to be said for them; but we think not this so much charity to the person deceased, as to the priest; for he doubtless receives most benefit from it.

Thirdly, And whatever they pretend, the great number of saints canonized and commemorated among them is neither a sign of the good state and condition of their church, nor is their keeping so many holydays in remembrance of them any instance of true devotion.

As for many of the saints which they commemorate, we own as well as they, and can pretend as good a right in them as they can, because we own and will submit to whatever can be urged from them; such are the blessed Virgin, the apostles, and the evangelists; and after them also the bishops, martyrs, and confessors in the primitive church: but we confess that we have not the same esteem of many whom they commemorate as saints, and utterly disallow of their canonizing or sainting of them: for many of them (I believe) never had any being, but in the fancy of these saint-makers, who yet are commemorated and prayed to as well as any others. Such are St. Longinus, under which name they have made a man of the spear which pierced our Saviour's blessed body; St. Almachius, on Jan. 1, which only comes from the corruption of Almanack; St. Amphibalus, who was only St. Alban's cloke; St. Ursula, and her 11,000 virgins, of whom no footsteps can be found in true history. Many of them, I fear, had been better that they

had never been, as being notoriously vicious and scandalous in their lives. And others, though more innocent, yet, if we believe what is written in their lives, were so prodigiously ridiculous, that a wise and religious man would be ashamed of such company. To hear men in an ecstasy of devotion to talk nonsense, or to preach to birds and beasts, to run naked, to wander voluntarily in deserts, &c., is more likely, with sober men, to bring their persons and actions into contempt and scorn, than to affect them with any quick sense of religion; at best, it will excite men only to that ecstatical and enthusiastical kind of devotion which was in vogue among the heathens, whose priests were besides themselves when they spake in the name of their gods, and their most celebrated exercises of religion were such kind of irrational actions; but there is nothing of this at all countenanced under Christianity: for the gospel would make us wise as well as devout; and it is not required that we put off the man, but the old man and its vices, when we become Christians.

And though we are sensible of many among us that have been very exemplary for virtue and piety, and have no reason to doubt of their salvation, but have as full assurance of it, at least, as they have of their saints; yet we are very shy of canonizing or sainting of them, because we know not men's hearts, nor dare we to presume to dispose so absolutely of heaven as the pope doth. We thank God for those that have lived and died well among us, and exhort our people to imitate all the good which shewed itself in them; but we know not to what purpose canonization is. If it be only to recommend their virtues to example, the canonization of them will signify no more than the bare history of their good lives, faithfully recorded, would do; but if it be in order to praying to them, we utterly condemn it. And it is too plain that this is the end of their being canonized; for from that time solemn prayer and invocation is allowed and offered up to them. And this I believe hath been an occasion of their falling from the truth of Christian doctrine as well as practice: for they taking such a man to be a saint, think themselves obliged to follow and vindicate whatever he either did or said as holy and true, not considering that the best of mere men have been guilty of mistakes

and imperfections; and then much more may we suspect the judgment and understanding, the virtue and piety of many of those that fill up the bigger part of the Romish calendar.

And for the same reason we think there is not much religion or devotion expressed in the keeping up the memory of such saints, by so many holydays observed among them.

If they commend their holydays for the opportunities afforded in them of serving God in public, we have such conveniences in many places every day.

If they commend them as days set apart to rest and idleness, we are not altogether of their mind; for we think we have as many as our poor can well spare, and are sure that they have more holydays than their poor can afford to observe: so that their holydays are no advantage to any. The rich need them not; because if they have abilities, they may be idle and luxurious every day: but they are a great evil and burden to the poor, when they are forced to lose so many days from their work, by which they should maintain themselves and their families. And though the popes, by reason of this cry of the poor, have been prevailed with to cut off many of those days of idleness, yet still, in most places, the number of them is intolerable.

Fourthly, As for images, I should have thought it more proper to range them among the hinderances of devotion, did I not see the men of Rome to plead earnestly for them, as helps and assistances, and to blame us for not using them, and paying no respect to them.

I confess myself not acute enough to discern how they can any ways advance devotion: for their paying such honour and respect to them, as they do own and acknowledge, must needs be a great distraction, it diverting the mind, and making men spend their religious reverence on that which is exposed to their view: but their paying such worship to them as they do pay, but are ashamed to own, is flatly destructive to all true devotion.

They indeed plead the ignorance of the people for the necessity of images, and call them *the books of the unlearned:* but they must first suppose their people insufferably ignorant to need such helps as these are. And to give the priests their due, if any ignorance would suffice to justify such a practice,

they take care to keep their people in ignorance sufficient: and then if they are so ignorant that they cannot worship God without an image, the church cannot be secure, but these so silly people may worship the image for God or Christ, or at least as having some extraordinary virtue in it, and so make an idol of it; especially when they see the eyes and hands of the image to move, and see miracles wrought by the touch of it, as is frequently pretended and believed to be done: so that either there is no need of images, or great danger in the use of them.

I confess I am not of Mr. Baxter's mind, who thinks that they may be properly or safely used to excite devotion; at least I must confess myself of a different temper from him. Methinks I represent God in greater majesty to myself, when I consider him in his works of creation and providence, than to see him pictured, as in the clouds, though with thunder in his hand. And my Saviour appears more lovely to my mind and thoughts, when I consider him as coming into the world, and dying for us, than when I see him pictured and carved on a crucifix: for it is more useful to see him with the eye of faith than of sense; and it is not the proportion of his body represented to my eyes, but the dignity of his nature, the love that he bore me, and the passions of his soul for me, that I admire most, and which no pencil can draw.

Besides, a picture or image tells me nothing but what I knew before; and it is by what I knew before that I can make sense or any devout use of this picture; for else I might take it for another profane and idle story. And I would fain know, whether the reading considerately the 26th and 27th chapters of St. Matthew, will not affect any pious heart much more than the seeing and contemplating a picture. Certainly, if this will affect the sense and bodily passions, the other will more work on our reason, and that will be to better purpose. Nay, the seeing of any picture often will naturally make it familiar, and not at all affecting to us.

5. And if the severity of the monks to their bodies is not any great sign of devotion, much less can the austerities used by the common people turn to any great commendation of the church. It is true, they are forced to keep fasts, but it would make a man laugh to read how their casuists have defined con-

cerning the *modus*, the measure and end of fasting. Escobar hath resolved it, that "no drink breaks a fast, be it wine or chocolate; and because it is not wholesome to drink without eating, you may eat two ounces of bread; for that is but a quarter of a meal: and if a man should chance to break his vow of fasting thus, he is not bound to fast another day for it, unless on a new obligation: and if all this be too hard, you may be dispensed with for your whole life, and that whether there be any just cause for it or no. Nay, servants, though they eat never so gluttonously of the scraps, they break no fast." Indeed there need be no rules set down concerning the poor people's observing fasting days; they are kept low enough without them: and as for the rich, their fasting is mock-fasting, to fast to luxury with wine, and fish, and sweetmeats. Is not this great self-denial? If any therefore are still truly mortified, when they can thus help it, I must rather commend their own piety and devout temper, than the rules and orders of their church, which give so much liberty, that a man must have a very crossgrained appetite, or be in the highest degree sensual, not to be willing to comply with it. We find then no fault with fasting being enjoined, and at set seasons; for we ourselves commend and practise it: but let it not be to play tricks, but for true and real mortification, and for the proper ends of mortification, to humble the body to the soul, and to bring the mind to a better temper: and to these ends is fasting commanded by our church; but not as if we looked on this or that kind of meat to be unholy, or designed to purchase heaven by our abstinence, as the church of Rome doth.

6. And as for their pilgrimages, and worship of relics, they must needs have less pretence to religion: for their fasts, and other austerities, somewhat resemble true Christian duties; but these have no show that way. If pilgrimage be enjoined for penance, then there is no thanks due to the person performing it.

If it be voluntary, there is no true devotion in it: for the worth of it must consist in some of these reasons; viz. either, first, that God is more present, or, secondly, more propitious, in one public place of worship than another; both which are contrary either to the nature of God or his declaration in scripture, when he says, *In every place a pure offering shall be offered*

to him, Mal. i. 11; and, *Wherever two or three are gathered together in Christ's name, he is in the midst of them*, Matt. xviii. 20; and the teaching otherwise is in some measure to revive Judaism, which allowed God, as to some cases, to be served acceptably only in one place: or, thirdly, that the saint is more present or propitious here, than any where else; but we are speaking of devotion to God, not to the saint: or, fourthly, that it is their punishing themselves that is so acceptable; but that hath been sufficiently discarded already: or, fifthly, that going so far, and taking such pains, is a sign of their love. But a man may shew his love to God, and to his saint too, by more proper instances, and do more good by it: which God, to be sure, will better accept; and the saint, if he be a saint, will like as well. And therefore the making such account of pilgrimages seems rather to favour the Mahometan than the Christian religion: for the going on pilgrimage to Mecca is one of the five indispensable points of the Mahometan superstition.

And as for the veneration of relics, all the world knows what a cheat is put on men, in vending any old rotten bone, or piece of cloth, &c., for a relic of this or that saint: so that, according to a moderate computation, I suppose scarcely one in a hundred is true; and some have pleaded they need not be true. Now whatever devotion is performed to, or on occasion of, these relics, can be commendable only in regard of the mind and devout temper of the person; which I think might as acceptably shew itself in any other proper time and place: and there is required a long series of consequences before the sight of St. Joseph's axe, or any such other of their relics, can be pretended to raise a man's devotion. But it being the chief trade at Rome to sell feigned pieces of antiquity, and other such worthless trinkets, at a high rate, I the less wonder that they have such an esteem for relics; for it is for their profit to keep up the value of them, they being the principal commodities of the place.

7. And the belief which they have of the saints hearing them, and their practice of praying to them, is no proper encouragement or instance of true devotion: for all devotion is properly towards God, and therefore the making addresses to any other cannot possibly have any direct tendency to exalt

our devotion to him, but is really a great hinderance; for it takes men's minds off from God, and sets them on his creature: and the same time that is spent in prayer to them, surely is better spent in praying to God, who is more present with us, hears us better, and loves us more: and men's going to saints when God is present, naturally tends to provoke God's jealousy; for he declares himself jealous as to his worship particularly, to set them up in competition with God, and to create in men an opinion that they are more easily entreated, and readier to do us a kindness, than he is: and therefore though men may fear God more, yet they will rather love the saint; and love is the truest motive to such devotion as will be best accepted with God: and yet in this plainly consists all that court which they make to the Virgin Mary, that she would pacify the anger of God the Father, or of the Son towards men: they are represented severe, and almost cruel, to render her more amiable to the people in her interceding for them: so they frequently, in their printed allowed books of devotion, call her *Fountain of mercy and pity*; and other names of the like importance. Now all the assurance they have of her being so tender and compassionate, is only because she is a woman; but they are assured of God's mercy, both from his nature and his word. They have no assurance that she, or any other saint, hears them; nor can they shew how the saint can be rationally supposed to know every thing that we do or say: but they are well assured that God hears them; for he is styled *the God that heareth prayer*; which prerogative of his, by every prayer to a saint, they may at least suspect that they intrench on. They are not assured that the saint can help them; but they may be fully satisfied of his help, who is almighty. They have no encouragement from scripture for praying to saints: for though the angels rejoice at the repentance of a sinner, it doth not follow that therefore every concern of men is known, or prayer is heard by them; much less that we may pray to them for the gift of repentance, or any other grace. And prayer being so considerable a part of Divine worship, we need not doubt but the angels and saints would refuse it: for so St. John was rebuked for offering to worship the angel, though supposed immediately and visibly with him, *Worship God*, Rev. xix. 10.

So that if they prayed to saints and angels only to mediate and intercede for them to God, it is more than they have any warrant or allowance for, Christ being always represented as the Mediator between God and man; and the setting up his servants in his office, is as far as is possible a deposing of him. Nor is it in this case, as it is in courts on earth, (which is their common excuse,) where a favourite is made use of to represent our cause and our request to the king: for this is done because our kings do not know our persons, nor understand our case, nor can they be present at all places, and hear all causes themselves: so that it is often necessary that princes should employ and trust other than their own eyes and ears. Many things they think below them to inquire particularly into; and sometimes they will do that at the request of a favourite, which they would not do for the sake of a person that is not particularly known to them. But there is no room nor occasion for this in the court of heaven: for God is not only intimately known, but is immediately present to all his creatures, as he hath declared himself *no respecter of persons*, but to love all; and therefore there is no need of any intercessor for us, except the Lord Jesus: he affects not empty pomp and state, but his providence extends to every particular concern of the meanest of all his creatures; and though he may give some undeserved favours, as longer lives, and further opportunities of amendment, &c., for the sake of others' prayers, yet no man is so far his favourite, as to be able to persuade him to reverse his own laws, and to save a wicked person that continues in his wickedness. On all which accounts, there is no occasion of praying to the saints so much as to intercede for us, as the church of Rome pretends. But to pray to them to bless us, and give us this or that temporal or spiritual good, as they of the church of Rome practise, and to suppose them to have power to help us in this or that particular difficulty and distemper, is plainly intolerable: for this is in a great measure to revive heathenism, by which men worshipped this or that god for this or that particular case. They must grant the saint to have, though not an original, yet a most certain and derivative power, according to which he will not fail to assist them that worship him; and in all such prayer, methinks they even terminate their worship on the saint: for if I pray to a saint to help me

in this or that difficulty, with a full assurance that this saint hath sufficient power to help me, though I should grant that this saint received this power from God, yet my prayers terminate on the saint. Indeed the saint is obliged to God for that power; but I seem to own myself only obliged to the saint for his applying this his general power to my particular case: just as I am obliged to a man for giving me an estate, though he is beholden to the government and laws, that either he enjoyed that estate himself, or was empowered to give it to another.

Besides that, they often pray to saints for such things, which, if they be only creatures, they can have no power to give, or to be even so much as the instruments of conveying to us; and yet it is notorious they pray sometimes to the saints for grace, for pardon of sins, and strength against them. So in Bonaventure's Psalter[b], translated into Italian, and published for the use of the people, though the translator and publisher says, that he had purged it from the blasphemies which were in the former editions; yet we find such passages as these to the Virgin Mary: Psal. vii. "Come to her all ye that are heavy laden, and she shall give rest and refreshment to your souls." Psal. xl. "Cleanse my heart." Psal. xli. "Thou art the beginning and the end of my salvation." Psal. xliv. "By thy holiness my sins are purged, and by thy integrity incorruptibility is given to me." Psal. civ. "Eternal salvation is in thy hand, O Lady, and he that worthily honoureth thee shall obtain it." And many more sayings of this nature, or worse if possible. Now can any man say that such prayers as these are fit to be offered up to a creature, or that they are instances of the devotion of a Christian, when they are so offered? I am sure that we charge the heathen with giving Divine worship to men, though we can hardly find any expressions or prayers to their gods which are so high, and argue their terminating their worship on them so fully as these, and other such, which are commonly used by those of the church of Rome to saints, and especially to the Virgin Mary.

8. And whatever they pretend, the constant trade which they make of confessions and penances, and their doctrine con-

[b] Salmi di S. Bonav. in lode della virgine, per Giovan. Battista Pinello. In Genoa, anno 1606.

cerning them, is so far from encouraging devotion, that it is enough to destroy all true devotion out of the world, if the providence of God did not miraculously interpose.

For though they be very constant in their confessions of all their sins to a priest, yet the frequency of it in themselves and others, makes them not so much as ashamed of themselves; and though they may be more afraid of angering their priests, yet they have no reason to abhor themselves or their sins, in the sight of God, any more for it.

And when they have thus confessed, their confessor may enjoin what penance he pleaseth, or else may leave it to the penitent's own choice, as Escobar from Suarez affirms; and men are not used to be very cruel to their own bodies, or lay a very severe penance on themselves, when a lighter will serve; or else the confessor may say thus: "I impose on thee for penance whatever good thing thou hast done, or shalt do this day, or this week, or whatever evil thou hast or shalt suffer." And cardinal Tolet is of the same mind too. Now will not this make a man mightily afraid of sinning any more, when his ordinary course of conversation, and the unavoidable casualties of life, shall be turned into a sufficient penance, satisfaction, and punishment for his sin? And if the confessor enjoin no penance at all, indeed he is to blame, says Escobar; but still it is a sacrament for all that, because a satisfactory penance is not an essential part of the sacrament, but an integral.

But if, after all this, the confessor will impose a penance, the penitent may perform what he will of it: for, says Tolet, if he doth not perform his penance, his absolution stands good; only when he comes to confession next, he must confess that he did not perform his penance, and so his non-performance of penance will pass away in the crowd of his other sins, and there is an end of it. And if this please them not, there is an easier way still, if need be; for you may get another man to do your penance for you. Is not this a fine easy way to heaven, when the fasting and starving of the poor may be made to serve for a satisfaction for the sins and debauchery of the rich? Indeed Escobar from Suarez says, "There ought to be a just cause for one's performing penance for another." But here the other distinction will help them, *non ad valorem, sed*

ad justitiam requiritur causa, the penance is valid, though there be no just cause. And whether there be a cause or no, it is not doubted, says Escobar, but one may perform the penance for another, if the confessor will give leave: and it is to be hoped there are some good-natured confessors to be found. But good cardinal Tolet[c] is more free and generous than Escobar himself in this point: for he tells the confessor, "that he must impose a lighter penance, if he sees the penitent will not perform a harder," without ever telling the penitent that this lighter will not serve his turn; or without ever putting him in mind of his danger, or the necessity of a harder penance; and wholly commits it to the prudence of one priest to diminish the penance which another had imposed, without so much as once telling him, that perhaps this penance will not suffice. So that in plain terms, by consequence, he resolves it all into the power of the priest; and neither confessor nor penitent are any further accountable, that I perceive; if too slight a penance be enjoined, the sin is pardoned notwithstanding. And lastly, he goes on and shews, that though the penitent be enjoined to perform his penance in his own person, yet he may transfer this to another, without his confessor's leave; and yet he shall obtain the satisfactory part of penance, though not the meritorious, that is, he shall be excused from suffering evil, but shall not merit much at God's hand by such penance: and indeed I think he is very unreasonable if he expect more. And besides all this, the design of all penance being only to satisfy the debt of temporal punishment due to their sins, there are several easy ways provided by their church for the discharge of it, besides the severe penance; as, e. g. several short prayers, to the saying of which some scores of thousands of years pardon are annexed, *toties quoties*; there are large indulgences granted at jubilees, and at several other good times; and may at any time be had for a good sum of money: and if a man take no care of himself all his life, yet if he can purchase prayers to be said for him after his death, it will serve as well. And though the penance be never so easy, and be performed as triflingly, yet the absolution, by which they suppose the debt of eternal punishment is discharged, must be as com-

[c] Tolet. Instruct. Sacerd. lib. iii. c. 11.

plete and full as possible: for so the aforenamed cardinal, with a great deal of concern, takes care that the absolution be not pronounced conditionally, as, e. g. on condition that you amend your life, or perform your penance, &c., but it must be pronounced absolutely, without any *if* or *and*, thus: "I absolve thee," &c.

Now would not any one think that the church of Rome, by this method of confessions and penances so taught and practised among them, rather designs to find out the temper and inclinations of people, and to dive into the counsels of great men, or to answer some other such politic end, than to advance piety towards God, or amendment of life in the penitent? I am sure they can have no hearty respect for devotion, when they are taught to look on their prayers to God as a severe penance; and yet which they may be released from, by winning a game at cards, as is too commonly known.

9. And their doctrine concerning the merit of good works and supererogation, as it is false, so we cannot look on it as any encouragement to devotion; for God will not be served with a lie.

I confess, if what is required of men in their confessions and penances be enough to save their souls, they may very easily do more than is required; for they cannot do less, if they do any thing; though indeed one would wonder that any that consider the nature of the gospel, or the words of our Saviour, should ever pretend to supererogate.

But supposing their doctrine to be true in these points, they cannot be thought to advance devotion, but rather hinder it: for seeing it is somewhat natural for a man to love his own ease, every one will be apt to argue with himself, that so many have merited already, that there is no need of what he can do. Nay, it is folly for him to attempt it; for what need he endeavour to add to a stock of merit, which is already infinite, as some have thought?

And indeed it had need be infinite, else it is to be feared it is almost, if not quite spent; especially considering the vast expense of these merits in frequent jubilees, and other indulgences, the multitude of sinners, and the little extraordinary virtue and piety found among them at this day, to add to their store: so that methinks it may justly be questioned whether they are

not bankrupt before now, their disbursement so much exceeding their receipts; and the credit of their bank seems to depend wholly on their old stock of merit which the ancients laid up for them; and yet they grant that this was rather casual than out of design or good nature: for the saints designed only to make sure of doing enough for themselves; and it seems that less served their turns than they thought of, and the rest was laid by for the use of such rich sinners as the church would sell it to. So that all this stock of merit, which the church of Rome hath so great occasion for, and of which there is made so prodigious an expense, is at the best but a chance and a spare heap, which they cannot tell how they came by, (for every bishop hath the same title to such treasure-trove that the bishop of Rome hath,) nay, they have reason to fear there was never any such treasure: (for I doubt not but the saints in heaven will thankfully own that they have received more from God than they deserved, or could challenge.) To be sure they knew not how much there was ever laid up, nor whether the stock be spent; and yet they spend as freely now as if they had been only laying up till this time, and that the treasure were now first opened.

Many other such absurdities and unanswerable difficulties there are in their doctrine of merit, and in their practice of applying these merits to the use of others. And is it not a dismal thing, that the priests of the church of Rome should teach men to trust in, and, as to salvation, depend assuredly on these, of which they themselves have no manner of assurance nor ground to hope? Is not this to play with men's souls and eternal salvation? And especially can this be urged as an encouragement of devotion, when, if it were as true as it is false, it tends directly to make men vicious, and to neglect devotion: for so a man will think, if there be such a stock in the church, why should not he have a share of it as well as another? And if one can merit for another, why should not he depend on others, as well as they on his merits? And seeing merits may be bought, as the Roman casuists have adjudged, he may think it very reasonable that others' merits should be given him in exchange for his money. So the result of all is this, according to this doctrine, and the supposed church-stock,

only one thing is needful, and that is money; and this will fully make up all lack of piety and devotion.

10. And the belief of purgatory, and of the validity of prayers for the dead, is no proper encouragement of true devotion: for true devotion is such as we perform to God, agreeably to his will, when we know what we do, and for what ends, and have a promise or hope of success: but when a man prays to God to deliver a soul out of purgatory, he must suppose as true several things which are either false or at least very uncertain; so that he can never pray in faith, or without great perplexity and distraction of mind; for he knows not whether there be any such place or state as purgatory; for scripture says nothing of it, nor the fathers of the three or four first centuries. He knows not whether the soul that he prays for be in purgatory, (if there should be such a place,) for it may be in heaven or in hell for ought he can tell. And if the soul be in purgatory, he knows not whether it be useful or lawful to pray for it; for God hath given us neither command, nor encouragement, nor liberty so to do. Nay, there are several particulars which they themselves cannot agree on concerning purgatory, viz. What sins are punished there? How the soul without its body can be tormented there with a material fire? Who are God's instruments in punishing the souls there? for the devils are not: and how the pope, by his indulgences, can apply the satisfactions of Christ, and of the saints, so as to deliver any soul out of purgatory? And if there be such a place, the pope himself, by his example, doth enough to dishearten all men from endeavouring to deliver the souls of their friends from thence: for it is not doubted but he can deliver all out of purgatory, he having the command of the treasure of the church. And it must needs be a wonderful discouragement to a devout mind, that among so many hundred popes, there should not be one found so charitable as to release so many thousands of poor souls that lie under intolerable pains, and so must lie till the last day, or till the debt of their temporal punishment be paid. If the pope can do so much with so little charge or trouble to himself, and yet will not do it, surely I have less reason to do any thing.

Nor doth it follow, that because it is a part of acceptable

devotion for one man to pray for another, whilst living here on earth, that therefore it is as pleasing to God for us to pray for souls departed: for our prayers for others on earth are either for temporal blessings, or for the means of grace. We pretend not to desire God to reverse his own laws, and save such a man, let him be as bad as he will; but to make him holy first, and then to make him happy: and to pray any otherwise for another man, naturally tends to represent it as feasible to reconcile a wicked life with the hopes of heaven; but when a man is dead, he can work no more, nor make any use of the means of grace, and therefore there is no room for this prayer to God for him; he is not capable of repentance and glory and amendment, and of being made fit for heaven.

Lastly, If they boast of the validity of the orders of their bishops and priests, as an encouragement to devotion, the validity of the sacraments depending so much on the legality of the ministry; we answer, that we have a clergy as properly and truly of Christ's sending, as any church in the world; against whose ordination and mission nothing can be objected: we deriving the succession of our bishops, not only from their own Austin, but from the British bishops before his time, which is the only regular way of mission that we know of, except that of an extraordinary commission from heaven, as St. Paul had. And I would not that there were that to be objected against us, that is justly objected against them, as to the succession of their popes, even since the reformation began: for the election of Sixtus V. was most notoriously simoniacal; and yet one that comes by simony into the popedom, is by their own canon law, by the bull or constitution of Julius II. approved in the council of Lateran[d], an. 1513, "to be looked on as a magician, heathen, publican, and arch-heretic, and his election can never be made valid by any after act;" and yet several of the popes since were either made cardinals by this Sixtus V. or received that dignity from those that received it from him; which is the very case of this present pope Innocent XI.

As for their unity, it is plain that they have more divisions among themselves than they can charge us with: for they have

[d] Septimi Decretal. lib. i. tit. 3.

not only such as openly dissent and separate from them, but great and violent dissensions among their own members, and such as live in the communion of their church, one against another, and each party pleads the doctrine of the church, and decisions of its councils. And yet the pope himself, notwithstanding his infallibility and authority, either cannot or dare not determine which is in the right, or which opinion is true.

So that whatever power and authority their church hath, it hath no good effect to such ends and purposes to which church-power is designed to serve, the encouragement of holiness and virtue, and the discountenancing of vice, the preservation of the doctrine in purity, and of the members at peace one with another. It is true, they are more able to see the laws of their church duly executed; but it is to their disparagement to have so much power, and yet to do so little good with it. As for us, we had rather deserve more than we have, than that it should be said that we have more power than we deserve. And whatever power our church wants, and whatever loss religion suffers by this means, we justly charge the church of Rome with the guilt of it, who have made all princes jealous, and afraid of all church-power, by their invading their temporal rights under pretence of a spiritual jurisdiction.

In short, though somewhat may be said for the worst thing, and a very bad cause may have a great deal pleaded in its vindication, as we have seen in all the foregoing helps and instances of devotion which the church of Rome boasts of; yet, if we consider them, they all, in some respect or other, come short of what they pretend to; several of them being very improper, many plainly nonsensical and ridiculous: they proceed from bad principles, are done in an undue manner and measure, or to secure some bad end or design, or some such other way offend; even the most severe practices, which most resemble true self-denial, are countenanced or enjoined rather to make a show, or to gratify some tempers, than to advance devotion; for excesses and over-actings are often infirmities, and the effects of weakness; steadiness being the most certain sign of strength, as the shaking palsy is a disease and sign of weakness, as well as the dead one.

3. I now come to consider such things in the doctrine and

discipline of the church of Rome, as tend directly to promote debauchery of manners and carelessness in devotion.

I will insist only on these few, among very many.

First, The unlimited power which they ascribe to the church, or to the pope, as head or monarch of it: for the people are taught, that he can make null duties that were made necessary by God, and make necessary what was not so before. The consequence of which doctrine is plainly this, that a man may safely disobey and neglect the serving of God, if he pay but his due respects to the pope. And yet their casuists have defined, that the pope can dispense with sins, or give leave to do things forbidden by the law of God, as well as pardon them when committed, as in the dispensations with unlawful marriages. And on the other side, he can excuse them from doing what they are, by their duty to God, bound to do, as in his dispensations with vows, though made never so solemnly to God himself: that is, he can bind where God hath left us loose, and he can loose where God has bound us. Nay, a superior can give a dispensation, even when he doubteth whether it be lawful or no; because in a doubtful case, the milder side is to be taken. And if the reason ceaseth for which the dispensation was given, yet the dispensation doth not cease: nay, a dispensation may be granted where there is no reason or cause for it; and yet the dispensation is valid notwithstanding: and not the pope only, but every bishop and priest hath his share of this power, only there are some reserved and more profitable cases, which his holiness only can dispense in. And though I cannot tell what they think, yet I am sure their casuists are very shy of saying that there is any case in which there may not be a dispensation granted for the doing of it, or a pardon for it when it is done.

And all indulgences are directly designed to hinder devotion, for they are given to free men from the necessity of mortification, frequent alms, and prayers, &c., which else would have been enjoined as penance; and yet we know that these are the chiefest parts of devotion.

And as their general doctrine concerning the validity of pardons and indulgences is very destructive of all true piety and religion; so,

Secondly, Their constant practice of giving absolution before

penance, is, in a more especial manner, influential to that purpose: for the people are taught to believe, that by the priest's saying, "I absolve thee," &c. the sin is actually pardoned by God: and though indeed their guides of confessors advise that absolution should not be given till penance be imposed and accepted, yet when the confessor thinks that the penitent will accept of the penance, he may absolve him first: that is, the person may be absolved before he accept the penance, or even promise to perform it; but it is their constant method to absolve him before penance be actually performed.

Now if their absolution be of force, the person is free from his sin, and sure enough of heaven, whether he performs any penance or no: which practice gives all imaginable encouragement and license to sin; the fear of penance being the only restraint from sin, which they pretend to: but if the sin be fully pardoned before penance be accepted or performed, I see not why a man should trouble himself much for the performance of his penance: he sees plainly that it is only an appendix that is used to be annexed to absolution, but is neither necessary in itself, nor for absolution; the sin is pardoned already, and at the worst there is only some temporal punishment to be satisfied for, which he may get rid of several other ways.

Nay, indeed the true and ancient notion of penance is utterly destroyed, by its being imposed and performed after absolution: for penance, according to the primitive use of it, was a severe course of life prescribed to a person that had grievously offended, as a proper method for him, at the same time to testify his own sorrow for his sin, and abhorrence of it, and to create in him an aversion to the like for the time to come; and also to satisfy the church of all this, that so he might be admitted to absolution and the communion: and therefore their penances were always public; and indeed it is by public penance only that all these so good ends can possibly be answered: but now in the church of Rome, the offender is pardoned without any thing of this; he is not put to any grief for his sin before he be absolved. It is left wholly to his own honesty and generosity whether he will perform any penance for his sin. Nay indeed, so loath are they to appear severe against sin, or cruel to the sinner, that when in the

council of Trent some would have revived this discipline, by enacting public penance, they were violently opposed and overruled; though St. Gregory, a pope of Rome, had held it to be of Divine right; and their casuists since teach, that a confessor cannot, nor ought not to enjoin a public penance: so that by this means a man is not so much as to be put to the blush for his sins; for no such penance must be imposed, by which the sin may be known, and he is sure that the confessor, to save a kingdom, dare not reveal or discover it.

Thirdly, Their doctrine concerning the nature of several sins is such as must rather encourage men to continue in sin, than deliver us from it; and will spoil all true devotion to God, and that due regard that we ought to have to his commandments.

They[e] tell us there is a vast number of sins in their own nature venial, which are so very inconsiderable, that an infinite number of them all together will not deprive a man of the grace and favour of God, or make up one mortal sin, and for the pardon of which there is no need or occasion for the mercy of God: and yet they have no certain rules to discover whether a sin be mortal or venial; so that men are in wonderful danger of being cheated in a matter of so great moment as their eternal salvation.

They[f] tell us also, that an habitual sin is only a stain left by former voluntary sins, and a deprivation of habitual goodness; but hath nothing else that is evil in it. From which doctrine it necessarily follows, that a man is guilty only of those sins which created this habit; and that there is not an habitual repentance or course of life required to get pardon for habitual sins; but a few, or perhaps one single act of contrition will serve. So that the more a man sinneth, the better he may, and it is a piece of true prudence to get an habit of all sin betimes; for a man is accountable only for those sins which preceded the habit; all the sins which follow it will pass under the name of *inadvertencies*, and as such can be esteemed only as a kind of venial sins.

And they not only allow the church power to command what doth not belong to her in many cases, but give such authority

[e] Escobar, Tract. ii. Exam. 1. cap. 4.

[f] Escobar, Tract. ii. Exam. 1. cap. 2.

to her commands, as to make the disobedience to them the greatest of all sins, and make way for the breaking of the laws of God, that they may keep those of the church. So marriage hath been adjudged a greater sin in a priest than fornication, because the priests are obliged to celibacy by the laws of the church and their own vow; as if they were not, by the laws of God and their vow of baptism, more obliged to abstain from fornication; and accordingly, for marriage a priest is excommunicated or deposed; but for fornication, he is only obliged to confess it secretly among his other sins; and the guilt and irregularity of it is done away by absolution. Indeed they bring almost all sins under the head of *discipline*, not only by pretending to give pardon and dispensations for most sins that can be committed, but also when they compare sins, they are always most earnest against such as transgress the commands of the church. So, v. g. when Escobar asks the question, "What if I communicate unworthily at Easter?" he answers, "That by so doing, I fulfil the command of the church, which is what I am immediately bound to;" and passeth over the duty of self-examination and preparation, so strictly enjoined by St. Paul, as not worthy to be considered; and so in innumerable other cases: by which means indeed they create a great veneration for the church, or for that which they call the church; but thereby *make the commands of God of none effect*.

Fourthly, Their very doctrine concerning their prayers and devotions, and their practice consequent on it, is such as is altogether inconsistent with the nature of true devotion: for, according to the church of Rome, the outward act will suffice in many cases, though nothing of the mind go along with it; particularly as to prayers, Escobar, from Coninch and Durandus, affirms, that neither an actual nor virtual attention is required when a man prayeth; and they give an excellent reason for what they say, viz. "Because the church hath no power in hidden cases, but only in the case of auricular confession;" as if in prayer only, the power of the church, and obedience to its commands, were to be regarded: and he confirmeth his assertion with this other most cogent comparison, that an outward act of devotion, or prayer only with the mouth, is a true act of prayer, though without the intention, as an outward act

of adoration of an idol, though without the intention, is a true act of idolatry. So that for a man to mind what he doth when he is at prayers, or to be earnest in his desires of that which he prayeth for, though it may possibly be a commendation and accomplishment, yet it is not necessary, either to the pleasing of God, or satisfying of his duty, according to the church of Rome. Nay, it is a praise for a man to *draw nigh with the mouth, and honour him with the lips, though the heart be far from God;* notwithstanding that our Saviour, after the prophet Isaiah, blamed the Jews for so doing. Indeed, such a kind of superficial Christians will this doctrine make, that a pharisee would have been an excellent man, if he had lived in these days.

And pursuant to this doctrine of the no-necessity of attention at prayers, they take care that the people shall not be able to attend to what is done; and therefore provide, that the public prayers, and the scripture itself, shall be only in a language unknown to the people, and are so desperately fond of this device of keeping the people ignorant of what is prayed for, that their casuists have defined, that a man may say his Office privately in other languages besides the Latin, as in Hebrew or Greek, but not in the vulgar language; at the same time keeping the people in ignorance, and discouraging them in their devotions, and exercising their authority over them in the most dangerous manner that can be.

6. Their ascribing spiritual effects to several things, which are purely of their own invention, is much to the discouragement of true devotion towards God. And yet they have very many things of this nature: as holy water, by the being sprinkled with which they believe the Devil shall have less power over them; Agnus Dei's, swords, and medals, which they wear to preserve them from dangers; which being consecrated according to the rules of their church, have, through the devotion of the persons, and the power of the church, a wonderful good effect, though indeed God never promised any such thing.

To this head I may refer also their rosary, which is nothing else but an odd combination of Paternosters and Ave Mary's; several short prayers, to the saying of which thousands of years of pardon of sins are annexed; their carrying the image

of St. Genovefa in procession at Paris, and other images in other places, to obtain rain, &c., and innumerable other such like practices, on which men are taught to rely, and to expect great good by, though they have neither any natural force or efficacy that way, nor any assurance from God that such effects shall follow. Nay, even the sacraments themselves, according to the doctrine of the church of Rome, are only such a kind of charms; for they are supposed to work effectually on the person, without any devotion or virtuous disposition being required of him in order to it.

Now, whatever effect they promise above what the natural efficacy of the thing is apt and able to produce, they must have express authority from God, or else they sadly delude and cheat those poor souls that depend upon them: and at the best they are supposed only a shorter cut to heaven, an easier way of pleasing God, and getting his blessing, and are invented only to ease a man of the fatigue and trouble of the common and ordinary road of serving him by a constancy and regularity of devotions.

Seventhly, Their manuals and books of devotion, which they give their people to read instead of the scripture, which they forbid to be used, though they may design them as helps, yet I must range them among the hinderances of devotion.

For the best of them are so full of tautologies and vain repetitions, that they must needs come under the censure of our blessed Saviour, Matt. vi. though they use his own holy name. For so in the Jesus Psalter, at the end of the Manual of Prayers and Litanies, printed at Paris in English, an. 1682, in a Litany of fifteen petitions, the name Jesu is repeated over above 130 times. And in the same book, in the Litany of the blessed Virgin, they pray to her by forty several names, being only so many distinct praises of her: and the like is observable in all their books of devotion which I ever saw. Now their saying the same thing so often over, is not contrived to help and assist attention, or prevent distraction, or as a repetition of what is more than ordinarily important, or for any other good and prudent reason, but out of pure vanity and ostentation, or as it were even to flatter our blessed Saviour, or the saint which they pray to.

But most of the books and legends which they put into the

hands of their people to excite their devotion, and by which the people take an estimate of the Christian religion, are such wretched plain forgeries, and so pitifully contrived fables, as can never be believed by men of sense; and if they could be believed, are proper indeed to make men mad and enthusiastical, but not to advance true devotion: and he that reads only such books, is qualified indeed to tell stories, and to believe lies, but no serious truth will stick to him, or be valued by him. So that such books as these are so far from doing good, that they do much harm to religion; for they imprint a wrong notion of religion on men's minds; would make a man believe that God is like a child, pleased with trifles; that religion, and the method of our salvation, is only a charm and trick, which the priests have gotten the receipt of; but that there is nothing in Christianity fit to make a man wise and manly in his worship of God, or in the management of himself and practice of devotion. Nay, the stories which are told in the lives of their saints, and believed by the common people, are enough to deprave the natural sentiments of mankind concerning God and religion; so that perhaps it were much better to leave men to the natural effluxes of their own minds, than to pretend to assist them with such helps as these. That a little water, or a consecrated bell, should scare the Devil, or St. Francis's rope charm and bind him, would make a man have little fear of such an enemy, or a prodigious veneration for such a saint; but how it should render a man more piously affected toward God, more relying on his providence, or more religiously careful over himself, I see not. And these stories, though so apparently false, yet being affirmed with such confidence, strike at the very foundation of our religion: for it is apt to make men believe that Christianity itself was at first propagated among a sad, dull, stupid, and credulous generation of men; (whenas really it first appeared in an age as sharpsighted as any age before or since, which is much for its vindication.) It would tempt a man to despise a religion, in which such men are saints, and such practices commended; and will set Christianity but on the same level with modern Judaism and Mahometism; for the Jews have just as much to say for their Cabbala, and the Turks for their incredible fables; for they are reported on the same credit, are just so credible in them-

selves, and just as edifying of the people that attend to them: the miracles which they relate being often just so useful, as that pretended to be wrought in the temple of Apollo; when a man coming out of the temple, it was observed that his body did not cast any shadow; by which thing, however strange in itself, the man was not much the better, nor the world wiser.

But many of their books of devotion are worse than ridiculous; for there are frequently such passages and prayers, as I cannot tell how to vindicate from blasphemy and idolatry. St. Bonaventure's Psalter, both in Latin and Italian, I mentioned before; in which there are, I believe, a thousand such prayers to the blessed Virgin, or expressions concerning her, which, I confess, I could not with a safe conscience say of any creature. And Albertus Magnus, the master of St. Thomas Aquinas, hath not only twelve books of the praises of the Virgin Mary, but also a distinct book called Biblia Mariana; in which he applies several places of scripture to the Virgin Mary, as if she were prefigured in several passages of the Old Testament, as well as her Son: so, Gen. i. 1. that "she was that heaven that God made:" Gen. i. 3. "she was the light which God there made:" and so on through almost the whole scripture. And however cautious they are in the books which they print in English, for the use of their converts here, yet in them we find often such sayings to or of the Virgin Mary, as I cannot reconcile with Christianity; for so, in the Manual quoted before, in the prayers for women with child, they sing thus to her:

> Hail to the queen, who reigns above,
> Mother of clemency and love, &c.

Elsewhere they pray thus to her, page 196: "O blessed Mother, assist my weakness in all my dangers and necessities, in all temptations to sin, and in the hour of my death, that through thy protection I may be safe in the Lord." Where the Lord indeed is mentioned out of compliment, and for fashion's sake; but they had first begged of the Lady as much as they wanted, or could desire: and, page 80, they call her "Spouse of the Holy Ghost, Promise of the Prophets, Expectation of the Patriarchs, Queen of the Angels, Teacher of the Apostles, Strengthener of Martyrs, faithful Comforter of the living and dead." Now if they print such things in English, what do they print in Spanish? *If they do such things in a green tree,*

what shall be done in the dry? And I fear that even their nicest casuists give too much countenance to this so gross practice: for they have determined that "honours above civil, *cultus hyperdulia*," are due to the Virgin Mary; that is, in plain English, Divine honours must be paid to her: for it must be a very metaphysical head that can, in this sense, apprehend a kind of honour above civil, and yet not Divine; it must be somewhat like his, that would pretend to find a mean between Creator and creature, between finite and infinite.

Lastly, This is most notorious, that they enjoin acts to be used, and propose objects of worship, which they themselves cannot deny but there is danger of offending in them, and even of falling into idolatry; and yet take little or no care of giving caution concerning them; and if the grossest abuse should happen, there is scarcely any possibility of redress.

Indeed wherever they speak of veneration due to relics and images, of worshipping saints, and especially the Virgin Mary, they always seem as if they cared not how much honour were paid to them; only they must make as if they put some restriction on it, for the sake of the reformed, who would exclaim against them: and therefore their command for the worshipping of them is general and absolute; but the limitations are so nice and forced, that one may easily see that they very unwillingly deny any worship to be paid to them. For so the wary council of Trent, speaking of images, says, "they are to be kept, and due honour and veneration paid to them:" and though by and by they seem as if they would limit this honour, yet presently they put in such words as make that pretended limitation to signify nothing: for they tell you, that "whatever honour you pay to the image goes to the persons represented," (v. g. to our Saviour,) it seems the honour is paid to him, whether we intend so or no. And hence you may easily gather what honour is due to the image of our Saviour, and how little fear there is of paying too much honour to it: for I suppose we are all agreed there is no fear of paying too much honour to our blessed Saviour; and whatever honour is paid to his image, is paid to him, if we can believe these gentlemen. And agreeably hereunto, it is very rare to hear of any person censured or blamed for paying too much honour to images, though surely it is as possible for men to be idol-

ators now as in the former ages; and I suppose that neither the common people, nor all the priests, are men of such extraordinary understanding and learning, as to be altogether free from the like temptation. Nay, the caution which is given seems only to concern *imagines falsi dogmatis, et rudibus periculosi erroris occasionem præbentes:* but there is not one word concerning the abuse which may be made of the image of Christ, or of a true saint: there is no provision made that men be warned not to perform too much devotion in their minds to a good image.

And by what this council says, the priest understands well enough what it intends; and therefore scarcely ever dare preach against the excess and abuse of images, relics, &c., though they cannot but see it actually committed every day.

And now if there should happen to be any idolatrous worship paid to an image, though the bishop hath power indeed to set the image up, yet he hath not power to pull it down, or to correct any abuse concerning it, without the leave of the archbishop and other bishops of the province, and even of the pope himself. So unwilling do they seem that any provision should be made for redressing abuses in so great and common a case as the excess in worship of images must needs be. V. Concil. Trid. Sess. 25.

Lastly, As we have seen how deficient and very faulty the church of Rome is, in her pretences to devotion, we will now consider what provision is made for the due exercise of devotion among ourselves; that we may thank God for our being settled in the communion of the church of England, and may learn to be conscientiously strict and regular in our own, as well as to despise the Romish devotions: and in order hereunto, I reckon that these four things are especially to be regarded.

First, That among us none but the true object of devotion is proposed to be worshipped, God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, none of the most blessed angels or saints in heaven being ever invoked or adored by us. For we look on them only as our brethren, and members of the same church with us, triumphing indeed whilst we are here below still in our warfare. We thank God for them, and keep feasts in memory of them, at the same time praising God for his goodness and

grace bestowed on them, and shining forth in them, and also stirring up ourselves by such commemorations to follow their good example; and this we think is as much as is due from us to our fellow-creatures, and believe that neither God allows, nor do they expect, more from us.

Secondly, Only proper expressions of devotion are commanded or allowed by our church. For the matter of them, they are such as God himself hath required to be served by, are significant of that disposition of mind which we know God accepts, and have an aptness to the producing of that temper in us, which God intends to work us up to by them. We use all the instances of devotion which they of the church of Rome use, if they be either necessary or fit, though indeed often to other and better purposes. We pray constantly, but only for the living; for we look on the dead as past the means of grace, and consequently past the benefit of our prayers. We praise God for his excellencies in himself, and thank him for his goodness to others, as well as to ourselves. We practise confession of sins to God in public and in private, and advise it to be made also to the ministers of God's word, when it is necessary for ghostly counsel and advice, for the satisfying of men's consciences, and the removal of scruple and doubtfulness; but we cannot say it is necessary to be made to men, in order to the pardon of God. We reckon it rather as a privilege or advantage, than a duty: and if men will not make use of this privilege as often as there is occasion, unless we tell a lie to advance the credit of it, we cannot help that. We enjoin fastings, and disallow not of penances, but advise people to take an holy revenge on themselves when they have sinned; but not as the papists do, to satisfy for their sins or merit at God's hand, but to shew the sincerity of their repentance, and to strengthen their resolutions of amendment; for it is our amendment, and not our punishment, which God is pleased with. And we take care that all these things be performed in a due measure, proportionably to the strength of the person, and the nature and design of the duty; but are afraid of straining them too high, lest men should be altogether deterred from them, or acquiesce only in the outward action, or render ourselves and our cause ridiculous by any imprudent management. We have the sacraments duly administered, as our Saviour commanded

them: we reckon our baptism with water perfect without oil or spittle: we grudge not the cup to the laity, nor celebrate solitary communions, nor admire whispering to God in the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ; but as we have received from Christ, so we teach and administer, without addition or diminution of any thing essential or material. In short, in the holy Offices themselves, and the behaviour which our church requires they be celebrated with, there is always a great propriety observable, agreeable to the command of God in scripture, and the practice of the apostles and first ages of the church, proper to the several parts of Divine worship, expressive of our sense, consonant to reason and the use of the world, especial respect being always had to the exciting of piety and devotion in the minds and carriage of our people.

Thirdly, All useful helps, motives, and occasions are here plentifully afforded and pressed on men. For we not only have all our service in a language which the meanest people understand, but have it so contrived by frequent responses, that every person bears a part in that worship which he is so much concerned in; and doth not only hear the priest speak to God Almighty, but prays for himself, and is required to join his assent to every short prayer by a distinct Amen. With us the same service and rules of life are enjoined to all, all men having the same concern in another life, however different their circumstances and concerns are in this life. We have constant prayers in every parish, weekly at least, in many daily, with the blessed sacrament of the body and blood of Christ frequently administered, nay, every Sunday, not only in cathedrals, but in several colleges and private parish churches. And we appeal to all men, whether there be any where more practical sermons, fitted to the cases of men, without vanity and superstition, than among us: whether good and free learning be any where more encouraged, or where better care is taken for the due instruction of the people: the scriptures being in every one's hands with us, and other excellent books made according to the doctrine of the holy scriptures, instead of legends and lives of saints, St. Bonaventure's Psalter, and other such books, which are really libels against Christianity, and yet are the principal books which the priests of the church of Rome commend to their people: for as for the Bible, if any

one of them hath happened to read in it, who is not licensed to that purpose, he must own it as a sin to his priest at his next confession.

And as there are such blessed opportunities afforded so constantly, and such prudent provision made for all cases ordinary and extraordinary: so I thank God we can say that our people are generally very diligent in the use of these means; (or would be more so, were it not for the divisions which they of the church of Rome especially raise among us;) for they may easily perceive that we urge no more on them than their own good and the commands of God require of them: though our church knows her power very well, yet she makes use of it only to enforce the laws of God, to explain, illustrate, and apply them to particular cases, but never to set up her own commands in opposition to them, as the church of Rome doth; and therefore though we teach our people to dread an excommunication, it being *summum futuri judicii prajudicium*, as Tertullian calls it, "a foretaste or forestalling of the last judgment," and not for a world to lie under it, though it were inflicted only for contempt; yet we warn them, in the first place, to avoid the cause and occasion of excommunication, and therefore not to value what censures of the church of Rome we are under, they being so very unjust and groundless.

Fourthly and lastly, As only the true object of devotion is here worshipped, only proper expressions allowed, all useful helps afforded; so also the greatest stress is laid on the practice of it, agreeable to the true nature, end, and design of it. The principal ends of devotion are to pay a homage to God our Creator and Benefactor, to get his blessing, and to work ourselves up to a better temper of mind: and to this end, we are in our service importunate without vanity or impertinency, long, without tediousness or idle repetitions; (only we use the Lord's Prayer often, that no part of our service may be without that perfect form, and also in consideration of the great comprehensiveness of it, and of the distraction of men's minds, which seldom can attend to the full sense of it all at one time.) And we teach our people, that every man must work for himself; for he that prays only by a proxy, it is very just that he should be rewarded only by a proxy too. We put our people in mind, that an unfeigned repentance is absolutely necessary,

and not a verbal one only; that it is out of our power, and of any man's in the world, to turn attrition into contrition. We pretend not to dispense with any for not obeying the command of God: we have no *taxa camerœ*, by which the papists are shewn how all sins are fined in their church; for in that book men see at what charge they may kill a father, or commit incest with their sisters: but we assure all, that *the wages of sin is death*, death eternal, if indulged, and not most earnestly repented of: and we tell all, that devotion is necessary for all, though the church of Rome hath ways of gratifying every inclination; so as they that will not lead a strict life, need not, and yet may have hopes of salvation: we own their policy in this contrivance, but do not so much admire their religious regard to the salvation of men's souls.

And to conclude, though we thus forcibly press all Christian duties on all men, yet at the same time we warn them not to pretend to merit heaven at God's hand; but after they have done their best, to confess they are unprofitable servants. We say of our charity, or whatever else we do in obedience to God, that *of his own we give to him*, and we are bound to thank him both for the will and the ability to give. The most that we pretend to is only to make a small acknowledgment by way of sacrifice for what we have received: we beg of God to accept it as a testimony of a grateful mind: and we know that his goodness is so great, that he will abundantly reward an honest and sincere servant, though he hath done no more than was his duty: and we hope that what we offer, though mingled with many imperfections, he will be pleased to accept for the sake of Christ, as if it were perfect.

These are the grounds that we go on in our devotions, and whatever we do for the honour of God; and thus designing, and thus acting and persisting, we need not doubt but the good providence of God, which watcheth over his whole church, will, in an especial manner, watch over this, which is so pure a member of it, that he will accept of the devotions which are offered to him in it, and hear the prayers that are made unto him for it, and defend it against all its enemies on every side; which God of his infinite mercy grant, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.

THE HAZARD OF BEING SAVED IN THE CHURCH OF ROME.

A SERMON.

1 Cor. iii. 15.

—But he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

THE context is thus: *According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.*

In these words the apostle speaks of a sort of persons who held indeed the foundation of Christianity, but built upon it such doctrines or practices as would not bear the trial; which he expresses to us by *wood*, *hay*, and *stubble*, which are not proof against the fire. Such a person, the apostle tells us, hath brought himself into a very dangerous state, though he would not deny the possibility of his salvation: *he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.*

That by *fire* here is not meant the fire of purgatory, as some pretend, (who would be glad of any shadow of a text of scripture to countenance their own dreams,) I shall neither trouble you nor myself to manifest; since the particle of similitude, ὡς, plainly shews that the apostle did not intend an

escape out of the fire literally, but like to that which men make out of a house or town that is on fire. Especially since very learned persons of the church of Rome do acknowledge that purgatory cannot be concluded from this text; nay, all that Estius contends for in this place is, that it cannot be concluded from hence that there is no purgatory; which we never pretended, but only that this text doth not prove it.

It is very well known that this is a proverbial phrase, used not only in scripture, but in profane authors, to signify a narrow escape out of a great danger. *He shall be saved, yet so as by fire*, διὰ πυρὸς, *out of the fire*. Just as δι' ὕδατος is used, 1 Peter iii. 20, where the apostle, speaking of the eight persons of Noah's family who escaped the flood, διεσώθησαν δι' ὕδατος, they escaped *out of the water*. So here this phrase is to be rendered in the text, *he himself shall escape, yet so as out of the fire*. The like expression you have, Amos iv. 11, *I have plucked them as a firebrand out of the fire:* and Jude 23. *Others save with fear, plucking them out of the fire.* All which expressions signify the greatness of the danger, and the difficulty of escaping it, as one who when his house at midnight is set on fire, and being suddenly waked, leaps out of his bed, and runs naked out of the doors, taking nothing that is within along with him, but employing his whole care to save his body from the flames, as St. Chrysostom upon another occasion expresseth it. And so the Roman orator[a] (who it is likely did not think of purgatory) used this phrase; *Quo ex judicio, velut ex incendio, nudus effugit:* "from which judgment or sentence he escaped naked, as it were out of a burning." And one of the Greek orators tells us[b], that "to save a man out of the fire was a common proverbial speech."

From the words thus explained, the observation that naturally ariseth is this, that men may hold all the fundamentals of Christian religion, and yet may superadd other things whereby they may greatly endanger their salvation. What those things were which some among the Corinthians built upon the foundation of Christianity, whereby they endangered their salvation, we may probably conjecture by what the apostle reproves in this epistle, as, the tolerating of incestuous marriages, communicating in idol feasts, &c. And especially

[a] Tully. [b] Aristides.

by the doctrine of the false apostles, who at that time did so much disturb the peace of most Christian churches, and who are so often and so severely reflected on in this epistle. And what their doctrine was we have an account, Acts xv, viz. that they imposed upon the Gentile Christians circumcision, and the observation of the Jewish law, teaching, that unless they were circumcised, and kept the law of Moses, they could not be saved. So that they did not only build these doctrines upon Christianity, but they made them equal with the foundation, saying, that unless men believed and practised such things they could not be saved.

In speaking to this observation, I shall reduce my discourse to these two heads:

1. I shall present to you some doctrines and practices which have been built upon the foundation of Christianity, to the great hazard and danger of men's salvation. And to be plain, I mean particularly the church of Rome.

2. I shall inquire, whether our granting a possibility of salvation (though with great hazard) to those in the communion of the Roman church, and their denying it to us, be a reasonable argument and encouragement to any man to betake himself to that church.

And there is the more reason to consider these things, when so many seducing spirits are so active and busy to pervert men from the truth; and when we see every day so many men and their religion so easily parted. For this reason these two considerations shall be the subject of the following discourse.

I. First, We will consider some doctrines and practices which the church of Rome hath built upon the foundation of Christianity, to the great hazard and danger of men's salvation. It is not denied by the most judicious protestants, but that the church of Rome do hold all the articles of the Christian faith which are necessary to salvation. But that which we charge upon them, as a just ground of our separation from them, is the imposing of new doctrines and practices upon Christians as necessary to salvation, which were never taught by our Saviour or his apostles, and which are either directly contrary to the doctrine of Christianity, or too apparently destructive of a good life. And I begin,

1. With their doctrines. And because I have no mind to aggravate lesser matters, I will single out four or five points of doctrine which they have added to the Christian religion, and which were neither taught by our Saviour and his apostles, nor owned in the first ages of Christianity. And the

First which I shall mention, and which being once admitted, makes way for as many errors as they please to bring in, is their doctrine of infallibility; and this they are very stiff and peremptory in, though they are not agreed among themselves where this infallibility is seated; whether in the pope alone, or a council alone, or in both together, or in the diffusive body of Christians. But they are sure they have it, though they know not where it is.

And is this no prejudice against it? Can any man think that this privilege was at first conferred upon the church of Rome, and that Christians in all ages did believe it, and had constant recourse to it for determining their differences, and yet that very church which hath enjoyed and used it so long, should now be at a loss where to find it? Nothing could have fallen out more unluckily than that there should be such differences among them about that which they pretend to be the only means of ending all differences.

There is not the least intimation in scripture of this privilege conferred upon the Roman church, nor do the apostles, in all their epistles, ever so much as give the least directions to Christians to appeal to the bishop of Rome for a determination of the many differences which even in those times happened among them. And it is strange they should be so silent in this matter, when there were so many occasions to speak of it, if our Saviour had plainly appointed such an infallible judge of controversies, for this very end, to decide the differences that should happen among Christians. It is strange that the ancient fathers, in their disputes with heretics, should never appeal to this judge; nay, it is strange they should not constantly do it in all cases, it being so short and expedite a way for the ending of controversies. And this very consideration to a wise man, is instead of a thousand arguments to satisfy him, that in those times no such thing was believed in the world.

Now this doctrine of infallibility, if it be not true, is of so

much the more pernicious consequence to Christianity, because the conceit of it does confirm them that think they have it, in all their errors, and gives them a pretence of assuming an authority to themselves to impose their own fancies and mistakes upon the whole Christian world.

2. Their doctrine about repentance, which consists in confessing their sins to the priest; which if it be but accompanied with any degree of contrition, does upon absolution received from the priest put them into a state of salvation, though they have lived the most lewd and debauched lives that can be imagined; than which nothing can be more plainly destructive of a good life. For if this be true, all the hazard that the most wicked man runs of his salvation, is only the danger of so sudden a death as gives him no space for confession and absolution. A case that happens so rarely, that any man that is strongly addicted to his lusts will be content to venture his salvation upon this hazard; and all the arguments to a good life will be very insignificant to a man that hath a mind to be wicked, when remission of sins may be had upon such cheap terms.

3. The doctrine of purgatory; by which they mean an estate of temporary punishments after this life, from which men may be released and translated into heaven by the prayers of the living, and the sacrifice of the mass. That this doctrine was not known in the primitive church, nor can be proved from scripture, we have the free acknowledgment of as learned and eminent men as any of that church; which is to acknowledge that it is a superstructure upon the Christian religion. And though in one sense it be indeed a building of gold and silver upon the foundation of Christianity, considering the vast revenues which this doctrine (and that of indulgences, which depends upon it) brings into that church; yet I doubt not, but in the apostle's sense, it will be found to be *hay* and *stubble*. But how groundless soever it be, it is too gainful a doctrine to be easily parted withal.

4. The doctrine of transubstantiation. A hard word, but I would to God that were the worst of it; the thing is much more difficult. I have taken some pains to consider other religions that have been in the world, and I must freely declare that I never yet in any of them met with any article or proposition, imposed upon the belief of men, half so unreasonable

and hard to be believed as this is; and yet this, in the Romish church, is esteemed one of the most principal articles of the Christian faith; though there is no more certain foundation for it in scripture, than for our Saviour's being substantially changed into all those things which are said of him, as that he is a *rock*, a *vine*, a *door*, and a hundred other things.

But this is not all. This doctrine hath not only no certain foundation in scripture, but I have a far heavier charge against it, namely, that it undermines the very foundation of Christianity itself. And surely nothing ought to be admitted to be a part of the Christian doctrine, which destroys the reason of our belief of the whole. And that this doctrine does so, will appear evidently, if we consider what was the main argument which the apostles used to convince the world of the truth of Christianity; and that was this, that our blessed Saviour, the author of this doctrine, wrought such and such miracles, and particularly that he rose again from the dead. And this they proved, because they were eyewitnesses of his miracles, and had seen him, and conversed with him after he was risen from the dead. But what if their senses did deceive them in this matter? then it cannot be denied but that the main proof of Christianity falls to the ground.

Well! we will now suppose (as the church of Rome does) transubstantiation to have been one principal part of the Christian doctrine which the apostles preached. But if this doctrine be true, then all men's senses are deceived in a plain sensible matter, wherein it is as hard for them to be deceived as in any thing in the world. For two things can hardly be imagined more different, than a little bit of wafer, and the whole body of a man. So that the apostles persuading men to believe this doctrine, persuaded them not to trust their senses; and yet the argument which they used to persuade them to this was built upon the direct contrary principle, that men's senses are to be trusted. For if they be not, then notwithstanding all the evidence the apostles offered for the resurrection of our Saviour, he might not be risen, and so the faith of Christians was vain. So that they represent the apostles as absurd as possible, viz. going about to persuade men out of their senses, by virtue of an argument, the whole strength whereof depends upon the certainty of sense.

And now the matter is brought to a fair issue; if the testimony of sense be to be relied upon, then transubstantiation is false; if it be not, then no man is sure that Christianity is true. For the utmost assurance that the apostles had of the truth of Christianity, was the testimony of their own senses concerning our Saviour's miracles, and this testimony every man hath against transubstantiation. From whence it plainly follows, that no man (no not the apostles themselves) had more reason to believe Christianity to be true, than every man hath to believe transubstantiation to be false. And we who did not see our Saviour's miracles, (as the apostles did,) and have only a credible relation of them, but do see the sacrament, have less evidence of the truth of Christianity than of the falsehood of transubstantiation.

But cannot God impose upon the senses of men, and represent things to them otherwise than they are? Yes, undoubtedly. And if he hath revealed that he doth this, are we not to believe him? Most certainly. But then we ought to be assured that he hath made such a revelation; which assurance no man can have, the certainty of sense being taken away.

I shall press the business a little further. Supposing the scripture to be a Divine revelation, and that these words, *This is my body*, if they be in scripture, must necessarily be taken in the strict and literal sense; I ask now, what greater evidence any man has that these words, *This is my body*, are in the Bible, than every man has that the bread is not changed in the sacrament? Nay, no man has so much; for we have only the evidence of one sense that these words are in the Bible, but that the bread is not changed, we have the concurring testimony of several of our senses. In a word, if this be once admitted, that the senses of all men are deceived in one of the most plain sensible matters that can be, there is no certain means left either to convey or prove a Divine revelation to men; nor is there any way to confute the grossest impostures in the world: for if the clear evidence of all men's senses be not sufficient for this purpose, let any man, if he can, find a better and more convincing argument.

5. I will instance but in one doctrine more; and that shall be, their doctrine of deposing kings in case of heresy, and absolving their subjects from their allegiance to them. And this

is not a mere speculative doctrine, but hath been put in practice many a time by the bishops of Rome, as every one knows that is versed in history. For the troubles and confusions which were occasioned by this very thing make up a good part of the history of several ages.

I hope that nobody expects that I should take the pains to shew that this was not the doctrine of our Saviour and his apostles, nor of the primitive Christians. The papists are, many of them, so far from pretending this, that in some times and places, when it is not seasonable, and for their purpose, we have much ado to persuade them that ever it was their doctrine. But if transubstantiation be their doctrine, this is; for they came both out of the same forge, I mean the council of Lateran under Pope Innocent the Third. And if (as they tell us) transubstantiation was then established, so was this. And indeed one would think they were twins, and brought forth at the same time, they are so like one another, both of them so monstrously unreasonable.

II. I come now, in the second place, to consider some practices of the church of Rome, which I am afraid will prove as bad as her doctrines. I shall instance in these five.

1. Their celebrating of their Divine service in an unknown tongue. And that not only contrary to the practice of the primitive church, and to the great end and design of religious worship, which is the edification of those who are concerned in it, (and it is hard to imagine how men can be edified by what they do not understand,) but likewise in direct contradiction to St. Paul, who hath no less than a whole chapter wherein he confutes this practice as fully, and condemns it as plainly, as any thing is condemned in the whole Bible. And they that can have the face to maintain that this practice was not condemned by St. Paul, or that it was allowed and used in the first ages of Christianity, need not be ashamed to set up for the defence of any paradox in the world.

2. The communion in one kind. And that notwithstanding that even by their own acknowledgment our Saviour instituted it in both kinds, and the primitive church administered it in both kinds. This I must acknowledge is no addition to Christianity, but a sacrilegious taking away of an essential part of the sacrament. For the cup is as essential a part of

the institution as the bread, and they might as well, and by the same authority, take away the one as the other, and both as well as either.

3. Their worshipping of images. Which practice (notwithstanding all their distinctions about it, which are no other but what the heathens used in the same case) is as pointblank against the second commandment, as a deliberate and malicious killing of a man is against the sixth. But if the case be so plain, a man would think that at least the teachers and guides of that church should be sensible of it. Why, they are so, and afraid the people should be so too; and therefore in their ordinary Catechisms and Manuals of devotion, they leave out the second commandment, and divide the tenth into two, to make up the number; lest if the common people should know it, their consciences should start at the doing of a thing so directly contrary to the plain command of God.

4. The worshipping of the bread and wine in the eucharist, out of a false and groundless persuasion that they are substantially changed into the *body and blood of Christ*. Which if it be not true, (and it hath good fortune if it be, for certainly it is one of the most incredible things in the whole world,) then, by the confession of several of their own learned writers, they are guilty of gross idolatry.

5. The worship and invocation of saints and angels, and particularly of the Virgin Mary, which hath now for some ages been a principal part of their religion. Now a man may justly wonder that so considerable a part of religion as they make this to be, should have no manner of foundation in the scripture. Does our Saviour anywhere speak one word concerning the worshipping of her? Nay, does he not take all occasions to restrain all extravagant apprehensions and imaginations concerning honour due to her, as foreseeing the degeneracy of the church in this thing? When he was told that his mother and brethren were without; *Who*, says he, *are my mother and my brethren? He that doth the will of my father, the same is my mother, my sister, and brother.* And when the woman brake forth into that rapture concerning the blessed mother of our Lord, *Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps that gave thee suck!* our Saviour diverts to another thing, *Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word*

of God and keep it. Does either our Saviour or his apostles, in all their particular precepts and directions concerning prayer, and the manner of it, and by whom we are to address ourselves to God, give the least intimation of praying to the Virgin Mary, or making use of her mediation? And can any man believe, that if this had been the practice of the church from the beginning, our Saviour and his apostles would have been so silent about so considerable a part of religion; insomuch that in all the epistles of the apostles, I do not remember that her name is so much as once mentioned? And yet the worship of her is at this day in the church of Rome, and hath been so for several ages, a main part of their public worship, yea, and of their private devotions too; in which it is usual with them to say ten *Ave Maries* for one *Pater Noster*; that is, for one prayer they make to Almighty God, they make ten addresses to the blessed Virgin; for that is the proportion observed in their rosaries. He that considers this, and had never seen the Bible, would have been apt to think that there had been more said concerning her in scripture than either concerning God or our blessed Saviour, and that the New Testament were full from one end to the other of precepts and exhortations to the worshipping of her; and yet when all is done, I challenge any man to shew me so much as one sentence in the whole Bible that sounds that way. And there is as little in the Christian writers of the first three hundred years. The truth is, this practice began to creep in among some superstitious people about the middle of the fourth century; and I remember particularly that Epiphanius, who lived about that time, calls it *the heresy of the women*.

And thus I have given you some instances of several doctrines and practices which the church of Rome hath built upon the foundation of Christianity. Much more might have been said of them, but from what hath been said, any man may easily discern how dangerous they are to the salvation of men.

I proceed now, in the second place,

II. To consider, whether our granting a possibility of salvation, though with great hazard to those in the communion of the Roman church, and their denying it to us, be a sufficient argument and encouragement to any man to quit our church

and go to theirs. And there is the more need to consider this, because this is the great popular argument wherewith the emissaries and agents of that church are wont to assault our people. Your church, say they, grants that a papist may be saved; ours denies that a protestant can be saved; therefore it is safest to be of our church, in which salvation, by the acknowledgment of both sides, is possible.

For answer to this I shall endeavour to shew, that this is so far from being a good argument, that it is so intolerably weak and sophistical, that any considerate man ought to be ashamed to be catched by it. For either it is good of itself, and sufficient to persuade a man to relinquish our church, and to pass over to theirs, without entering into the merits of the cause on either side, and without comparing the doctrines and practices of both the churches together, or it is not. If it be not sufficient of itself to persuade a man to leave our church, without comparing the doctrines on both sides, then it is to no purpose, and there is nothing got by it. For if upon examination and comparing of doctrines the one appear to be true and the other false, this alone is a sufficient inducement to any man to cleave to that church where the true doctrine is found; and then there is no need of this argument.

If it be said that this argument is good in itself, without the examination of the doctrines of both churches, this seems a very strange thing for any man to affirm, that it is reason enough to a man to be of any church, whatever her doctrines and practices be, if she do but damn those that differ from her, and if the church that differs from her do but allow a possibility of salvation in her communion.

But they who use this argument pretend that it is sufficient of itself; and therefore I shall apply myself to shew, as briefly and plainly as I can, the miserable weakness and insufficiency of it to satisfy any man's conscience or prudence to change his religion. And to this end I shall,

1. Shew the weakness of the principle upon which this argument relies.

2. Give some parallel instances, by which it will clearly appear that it concludes false.

3. I shall take notice of some gross absurdities that follow from it.

4. Shew how unfit it is to work upon those to whom it is propounded. And,

5. How improper it is to be urged by those that make use of it.

I. I shall shew the weakness of the principle upon which this argument relies; and that is this, that whatever different parties in religion agree in, is safest to be chosen. The true consequence of which principle, if it be driven to the head, is to persuade men to forsake Christianity, and to make them take up in the principles of natural religion, for in these all religions do agree. For if this principle be true, and signify any thing, it is dangerous to embrace any thing wherein the several parties in religion differ; because that only is safe and prudent to be chosen wherein all agree. So that this argument, if the foundation of it be good, will persuade further than those who make use of it desire it should do; for it will not only make men forsake the protestant religion, but popery too; and, which is much more considerable, Christianity itself.

II. I will give some parallel instances, by which it will clearly be seen that this argument concludes false. The Donatists denied the baptism of the catholics to be good, but the catholics acknowledged the baptism of the Donatists to be valid. So that both sides are agreed that the baptism of the Donatists was good; therefore the safest way for St. Austin and other catholics, (according to this argument,) was to be baptized again by the Donatists, because by the acknowledgment of both sides, baptism among them was valid.

But to come nearer to the church of Rome. Several in that church hold the personal infallibility of the pope, and the lawfulness of deposing and killing kings for heresy, to be *de fide*, that is, necessary articles of faith; and consequently, that whoever does not believe them, cannot be saved. But a great many papists, though they believe these things to be no matters of faith, yet they think those that hold them may be saved, and they are generally very favourable towards them. But now, according to this argument, they ought all to be of their opinion in these points, because both sides are agreed that they that hold them may be saved; but one side positively says, that men cannot be saved if they do not hold them.

But my text furnishes me with as good an instance to this

purpose as can be desired. St. Paul here in the text acknowledgeth the possibility of the salvation of those *who built hay and stubble upon the foundation of Christianity, that they might be saved*, though with great difficulty, and, as it were, *out of the fire*. But now among those builders with *hay* and *stubble*, there were those who denied the possibility of St. Paul's salvation, and of those who were of his mind. We are told of some who built the Jewish ceremonies and observances upon the foundation of Christianity, and said, that unless men were circumcised, and kept the law of Moses, they could not be saved. So that by this argument St. Paul and his followers ought to have gone over to those Judaizing Christians, because it was acknowledged on both sides that they might be saved. But these Judaizing Christians were as uncharitable to St. Paul and other Christians, as the church of Rome is now to us, for they said positively that they could not be saved. But can any man think that St. Paul would have been moved by this argument to leave a safe and certain way of salvation for that which was only possible, and that with great difficulty and hazard? The argument you see is the very same, and yet it concludes the wrong way; which plainly shews that it is a contingent argument, and concludes uncertainly and by chance, and therefore no man ought to be moved by it.

III. I shall take notice of some gross absurdities that follow from it. I shall mention but these two.

1. According to this principle, it is always safest to be on the uncharitable side. And yet uncharitableness is as bad an evidence, either of a true Christian, or a true church, as a man would wish. Charity is one of the most essential marks of Christianity, and what the apostle saith of particular Christians, is as true of whole churches, *that though they have all faith, yet if they have not charity, they are nothing.*

I grant that no charity teacheth men to see others damned, and not to tell them the danger of their condition. But it is to be considered, that the damning of men is a very hard thing, and therefore whenever we do it, the case must be wonderfully plain. And is it so in this matter? They of the church of Rome cannot deny but that we embrace all the doctrines of our Saviour contained in the Apostles' Creed, and determined by the four first general councils, and yet they will

not allow this and a good life to put us within a possibility of salvation, because we will not submit to all the innovations they would impose upon us. And yet I think there is scarce any doctrine or practice in difference between them and us, which some or other of their most learned writers have not acknowledged either not to be sufficiently contained in scripture, or not to have been held and practised by the primitive church; so that nothing can excuse their uncharitableness towards us. And they pay dear for the little advantage they get by this argument, for they do what in them lies to make themselves no Christians, that they may prove themselves the truer and more Christian church. A medium which we do not desire to make use of.

2. If this argument were good, then by this trick a man may bring over all the world to agree with him in an error which another does not account damnable, whatever it be, provided he do but damn all those that do not hold it; and there wants nothing but confidence and uncharitableness to do this. But is there any sense, that another man's boldness and want of charity should be an argument to move me to be of his opinion? I cannot illustrate this better, than by the difference between a skilful physician and a mountebank. A learned and skilful physician is modest, and speaks justly of things: he says, that such a method of cure which he hath directed is safe; and withal, that that which the mountebank prescribes may possibly do the work, but there is great hazard and danger in it; but the mountebank, who never talks of any thing less than infallible cures, (and always the more mountebank, the stronger pretence to infallibility,) he is positive that that method which the physician prescribes will destroy the patient, but his receipt is infallible, and never fails. Is there any reason in this case, that this man shall carry it merely by his confidence? And yet if this argument be good, the safest way is to reject the physician's advice, and to stick to the mountebank's. For both sides are agreed that there is a possibility of cure in the mountebank's method, but not in the physician's; and so the whole force of the argument lies in the confidence of an ignorant man.

IV. This argument is very unfit to work upon those to whom it is propounded; for either they believe we say true in

this, or not. If they think we do not, they have no reason to be moved by what we say. If they think we do, why do they not take in all that we say in this matter? Namely, that though it be possible for some in the communion of the Roman church to be saved, yet it is very hazardous; and that they are in a safe condition already in our church. And why then should a bare possibility, accompanied with infinite and apparent hazard, be an argument to any man to run into that danger?

Lastly, This argument is very improper to be urged by those who make use of it. Half of the strength of it lies in this, that we protestants acknowledge that it is possible a papist may be saved. But why should they lay any stress upon this? What matter is it what we heretics say, who are so damnably mistaken in all other things? Methinks if there were no other reason, yet because we say it, it should seem to them to be unlikely to be true. But I perceive, when it serves for their purpose, we have some little credit and authority among them.

By this time I hope every one is in some measure satisfied of the weakness of this argument, which is so transparent, that no wise man can honestly use it, and he must have a very odd understanding that can be cheated by it. The truth is, it is a casual and contingent argument, and sometimes it concludes right, and oftener wrong; and therefore no prudent man can be moved by it, except only in one case, when all things are so equal on both sides, that there is nothing else in the whole world to determine him; which surely can never happen in matters of religion necessary to be believed. No man is so weak as not to consider, in the change of his religion, the merits of the cause itself; as not to examine the doctrines and practices of the churches on both sides; as not to take notice of the confidence and charity of both parties, together with all other things which ought to move a conscientious and a prudent man: and if upon inquiry there appear to be a clear advantage on either side, then this argument is needless, and comes too late, because the work is already done without it.

Besides, that the great hazard of salvation in the Roman church (which we declare upon account of the doctrines and practices which I have mentioned) ought to deter any man much more from that religion, than the acknowledged possibi-

lity of salvation in it ought to encourage any man to the embracing of it. Never did any Christian church build so much *hay* and *stubble* upon the foundation of Christianity, and therefore *those that are saved in it must be saved*, as it were, *out of the fire*. And though purgatory be not meant in the text, yet it is a doctrine very well suited to their manner of building; for there is need of an *ignis purgatorius*, of a fire to try their work what it is, and to burn up their hay and stubble. And I have so much charity (and I desire always to have it) as to hope, that a great many among them who lived piously, and have been almost inevitably detained in that church, by the prejudice of education and an invincible ignorance, will, upon a general repentance, find mercy with God; and *though their works suffer loss and be burnt*, yet *they themselves may escape, as out of the fire*. But as for those who had the opportunities of coming to the knowledge of the truth, if they continue in the errors of that church, or apostatize from the truth, I think their condition so far from being safe, that there must be extraordinary favourable circumstances in their case, to give a man hopes of their salvation.

I have now done with the two things I propounded to speak to; and I am sorry that the necessary defence of our religion, against the restless importunities and attempts of our adversaries, upon all sorts of persons, hath engaged me to spend so much time in matters of dispute, which I had much rather have employed in another way. Many of you can be my witnesses, that I have constantly made it my business, in this great presence and assembly, to plead against the impieties and wickedness of men, and have endeavoured, by the best arguments I could think of, to gain men over to a firm belief and serious practice of the main things of religion. And I do assure you, I had much rather persuade any one to be a good man, than to be of any party or denomination of Christians whatsoever. For I doubt not, but the belief of the ancient creed, provided we entertain nothing that is destructive of it, together with a good life, will certainly save a man; and without this no man can have reasonable hopes of salvation, no not in an infallible church, if there were any such thing to be found in the world.

I have been, according to my opportunities, not a negligent

observer of the genius and humour of the several sects and professions in religion; and upon the whole matter, I do in my conscience believe the church of England to be the best constituted church this day in the world; and that as to the main, the doctrine and government and worship of it are excellently framed to make men soberly religious; securing men on the one hand from the wild freaks of enthusiasm; and on the other, from the gross follies of superstition. And our church hath this peculiar advantage above several professions that we know in the world, that it acknowledgeth a due and just subordination to the civil authority, and hath always been untainted in its loyalty.

And now shall every trifling consideration be sufficient to move a man to relinquish such a church? There is no greater disparagement to a man's understanding, no greater argument of a light and ungenerous mind, than rashly to change one's religion. Religion is our greatest concernment of all other, and it is not every little argument, no, nor a great noise about infallibility, nothing but very plain and convincing evidence, that should sway a man in this case. But they are utterly inexcusable, who make a change of such concernment upon the insinuations of one side only, without ever hearing what can be said for the church they were baptized and brought up in, before they leave it. They that can yield thus easily to the impressions of every one that hath a design and interest to make proselytes, may at this rate of discretion change their religion twice a day, and instead of morning and evening prayer, they may have a morning and evening religion. Therefore, for God's sake, and for our own souls' sake, and for the sake of our reputation, let us consider, and shew ourselves men; let us not suffer ourselves to be shaken and carried away with every wind. Let us not run ourselves into danger when we may be safe. Let us stick to the foundation of religion, the articles of our common belief, and build upon them *gold, and silver, and precious stones*, I mean, the virtues and actions of a good life; and if we would do this, we should not be apt to set such a value upon *hay* and *stubble*. If we would sincerely endeavour to live holy and virtuous lives, we should not need to cast about for a religion which may furnish us with easy and indirect ways to get to heaven.

I will conclude all with the apostle's exhortation: *Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast and immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.*

Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

THE PROTESTANT RESOLVED:

OR,

A DISCOURSE

SHEWING THE

UNREASONABLENESS OF HIS TURNING ROMAN CATHOLIC FOR SALVATION.

WE are all, I hope, thus far agreed, that sincere Christianity is the sure way to salvation; that to be saved, we must have the hearts, and not content ourselves with the bare name and naked profession of Christians; that the authority of God and Divine truth, and no worldly or carnal concern, must sway and govern our whole conversation. If we be not religious in good earnest, resolving and endeavouring to honour God in heart and life, according to the holy gospel of our blessed Jesus, it is no matter to us what religion we profess, or to what church we join ourselves. Wickedness and hypocrisy, through what church soever our way lieth, lead assuredly to hell. A wicked protestant and a wicked papist will in hell be of the same communion.

True Christianity is none other but that which was taught at first by Christ and his apostles, and all they who believe and live according to their doctrine shall be saved. Herein again we are all, I suppose, agreed. And if so, I think it very reasonable we should agree as well in that which I now add. It is not material to inquire, whether a man be of the church of Rome or of the church of England, to find whether or no he may be saved; but he that would satisfy himself of the possibility of salvation in the way wherein he now is, ought to inquire whether he believe and live according to the doctrine taught by Christ and his apostles; seeing they who do this are good Christians, what other names soever men may

bestow upon them, and all that are such shall be saved. If therefore I may be able to satisfy myself that I believe and live according to the doctrine delivered by Christ and his apostles, I have no reason to doubt of the possibility of my salvation in the way wherein I now am, though it were so that I had never heard to this day of any such thing as a church, headed by a pope or bishop of Rome. And I am yet somewhat confident, that a man may believe and live according to the doctrine of Christ and his apostles, and never hear of a bishop of Rome; because once men certainly did so, and yet were saved.

The next thing therefore that I have to do, is to inquire by what means I may certainly know what was the doctrine of Christ and his apostles; for by the same means whereby this may be known, I may also know the certain way to salvation. If there be no such means left us, we are all fools in professing a religion, the certain doctrine whereof can by no means be known. If such means there be, there must be some certain records safely conveyed down from their time to ours; for by what other means we at this distance of so many hundred years should be certainly informed what they taught, is by me inconceivable. These records then are to be diligently searched into, and impartially examined; and whosoever is found to believe and practise according to the doctrine in those records contained, may be concluded to be in the way to salvation.

Such certain records we have, even the books of the holy evangelists and apostles, which, together with the books of the Old Testament, we call *the Holy Scriptures*. In this we are all again unanimous; both papists and protestants agree, that the doctrine in these books contained, is the doctrine of Christ and his apostles, and Divine truth. Whence it certainly follows, that whatsoever doctrine is contrary to the doctrine contained in these books, whether it be taught by papists or protestants, is to be rejected, as none of the doctrine of Christ and his apostles. It ought not therefore to satisfy me, that this or that doctrine is taught by the church of Rome, or by the church of England; for by which of them soever it be taught, if it be found contrary to the doctrine of the holy scripture, it is by the consent of both churches to be rejected. Now seeing we protestants take this holy scripture, and it only, for the

rule of faith and life, it is certain, that holding to this rule, we do not err either in belief or practice: while on the other side we cannot be sure that they do not err in both, who receive another rule, till it appear the other rule which they receive is as true and certain as ours is acknowledged to be. Our part of the rule, and that which indeed we take to be the whole, being granted us, all the question is about their part of it. Ours is on all hands granted to be most sure and certain, theirs alone remains disputable; and therefore I cannot yet see any reason why I should think their way safer than our own, except it can be safer to follow an uncertain than a certain rule; which I think nobody will be so hardy as to affirm.

The rule which they of the Roman communion advance against ours, is that of tradition. I am therefore next to consider, first, what they understand by it; and, secondly, what greater reason I can find to persuade me that it is safer to trust to it, whether singly or in conjunction with our own, than to our own alone, which is the holy scripture.

This tradition consists of such doctrines of faith and practice as are supposed to have been taught either by Christ himself, or being dictated by the Holy Ghost to his apostles, were delivered by them to the church, not in writing, but in word only, and so have successively been handed down from father to son, unto the present age. And these are all, according to the council of Trent, to be received with equal affection of piety and reverence as the holy scripture.

Now I confess, if it may appear as evidently to me that Christ or his apostles left such doctrines to the custody of the church, of equal necessity to the salvation of Christians with those that are written in the scripture, as it doth that they left us these which are written in the scripture; and if I may be well assured that these very doctrines which the church of Rome now holds, and pretends to an authority of imposing upon all Christendom, are indeed the very same which were at first (as abovesaid) delivered to the church; I can see no reason why I should not be bound to believe the one as firmly as the other. For seeing it is the authority of the first preachers of it, and not barely the writing of it, that binds me to believe the doctrine; if I can be equally assured that as well what is unwritten as what is written was preached by them as necessary to the

salvation of mankind, I must needs also own an equal obligation upon me to believe them all alike.

But neither of these could I ever see cleared, nor can I conceive any hope that I shall hereafter. And seeing the proof of both lies wholly upon them, who affirm both, I cannot be obliged to believe them till by such proof they have convinced me. In the mean time, it seems enough to me that God himself was pleased to signify to the world his will in writing, which I cannot imagine why he should do, had he not intended we should learn his will from what is written, and not from any unwritten tradition. And I am the more confirmed in my opinion by this, that he did not use this way of revealing his mind unto men at the first, not till after the world had had a very long time to discern by experience the unfaithfulness of unwritten tradition. So that this, and some other considerations whereupon the papists use to ground their arguments against both the necessity and perfection of the scripture, seem to me very fully to evince both the one and the other; and so to leave no room at all for their unwritten traditions as any part of the rule of faith and life.

Yet, seeing they, who are always preaching this doctrine to us, that there is no salvation for them that are not of their communion, preach it not as a private opinion of their own, or of some few others in that communion, but as the generally received doctrine of that church, which pretends to be no less than infallible; it concerns me so much the more to use all possible diligence to find out what truth there may be in this assertion: and that, not only because I shall thereby discern the necessity of changing my religion to make sure of my own future happiness, but also because the determination of this one point will at once put an end (as it seems to me) to all the disputes that are now between the papists and us. If I can find it true, that no man can be saved out of that communion, I shall be a fool to trouble myself with the study of the scriptures, and seeking out for myself in them a way to heaven; when I may be sure, by stepping over the threshold out of one church into the other, to meet with an infallible judge, whom if I do but follow, I cannot go amiss. And to dispute any longer with myself, whether I should do so or not, would but shew me fitter for Bedlam than for any church; seeing

none but the maddest man alive would dispute for damnation. On the other side, if I shall find it false that a man cannot be saved out of that communion, I must needs be convinced that the Roman church, which hath determined it for a certain truth, hath already erred both in faith and charity, and that having erred, she is not infallible; and being not infallible, by her own confession, cannot be that one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church, out of which there is no salvation. So that as this assertion of that church shall be found to be true or false, even so will the popish religion appear also to be.

But here I meet with a very great difficulty in my way, as I am going to seek out the truth or falsehood of this assertion; that however I may be able to satisfy myself, yet I shall never (for ought I can see) be able to satisfy them who are the authors of it, any other way than by a total submission of my own judgment and conscience too to their determination, and a blind obedience to their will. The dispute (as is evident) is between two churches, the one whereof challengeth to itself the big-swollen prerogative of being the lady and mother of all churches; a sovereign authority of prescribing to the faith of all Christians; the right and incommunicable privilege of being the sole and infallible judge of all controversies in religion; finally, an unquestionable power of defining and declaring to all the world the true and only terms of salvation. Now, that this Roman-mother and mistress-church, sole commandress and infallible judge, having already in the fulness of power determined it, and by her supreme authority imposed an oath upon her subjects to maintain it, that none out of her communion can be saved, should after all this, in pure condescension to men declared heretics, divest herself of her authority, lay aside her infallible definitions, come down from the tribunal and the throne of judicature and majesty, and stand at the bar submitting herself and the whole cause to an indifferent and equal trial, is a thing as little to be hoped for, as it is yet unagreed upon by what law, jury, or judge, the controversy should be decided. And truly, on the other side, it seems to me altogether as unreasonable in her to accept, that we protestants of the church of England, though we pretend to nothing of this exorbitant power over her or other churches, or of determining disputes for all the world, should yet, upon a naked summons

from her, whose authority we question, and see no reason to acknowledge, forthwith subscribe to the sentence of our own condemnation, without any fair and legal process, or indeed so much as yield to a trial, where our professed adversaries must be at once the lawmakers, accusers, witnesses; and yet this is most notoriously our case.

What course now, in this case, can be taken by us? The church of Rome tells us expressly and peremptorily, we cannot be saved out of her communion. Must we believe her without any more ado? That is indeed the way to make a short end of all our differences, for then we must yield to be hers, or else run headlong to damnation. But if we believe her not, (as for my part I know not how we can do, till we see some reason why we should do so,) the dispute, for ought I can see, is like to be endless. For no such reasons can, or ought she to give us, if she will be constant to herself, and stand to her own principles, (as will plainly appear anon,) and if she desert her own principles, she must yield herself to be fallible, and not the true church; and then in vain is all talk of reasons why they that are not of her communion should be damned.

However, suppose it be pretended (as indeed it is) that we have had sufficient reasons given us why we ought to believe her in this point; this then is the present question between us, whether she hath given us sufficient reason for this or no? She confidently affirms it; we as confidently deny it. She calls us obstinate heretics for denying it, and lays many a heavy curse upon us: we for this think her a very unreasonable and imperious mistress, usurping an authority over us which God never gave her. Who, I wonder, shall now be thought fit to decide this dispute? She will be tried and judged by no other than herself; for she is resolved to be sole and infallible judge in all controversies of religion: that is, in plain terms, she will accuse us, and she will leave us no room for our own defence; she will condemn us, and she will not permit us to question the justice of her sentence. She tells us, we are bound to believe her, and obey her, or else we must die eternally for it. We desire some reason may be brought to convince us of this duty: and she tells us again, she is our supreme and infallible mistress and mother and judge; and so the conclusion is, we must believe

she hath this supreme authority and infallibility, because she is supreme and infallible; which we can yet see no reason to believe, and therefore cannot believe; and because we cannot believe it, we are declared to be heretics, and in a state of damnation.

Seeing then that the church of Rome will by no means recede from her claim to this supremacy and infallibility, it seems plain to me, that there is no possibility of satisfying her any way whatsoever, but by yielding myself up entirely to her without any further dispute. But because I cannot do this without violence to my conscience, and incurring that very damnation which she would persuade me thereby to prevent, I must of necessity leave her a while, to satisfy herself about the truth and charity of this doctrine as she can; whilst I, for my own private satisfaction, take into a very serious consideration these two things:

I. Whether I can discern any solid ground to hope that I may be saved, as I am now a protestant of the church of England.

II. What more hopeful way to salvation the church of Rome can put me into, should I enter into her communion.

If the result of this double inquiry shall be, that I really think myself in a fair way to salvation where I am already, and cannot discern any more hopeful way to it in the church of Rome, I must needs account myself bound in conscience, and under the penalty of damnation, to steer my course according to the best light I shall be able, by such a diligent and impartial inquiry, to attain unto, and content myself with that religion which seems best and safest to me, till some better and safer can be found.

SECT. I.

The first thing I am to inquire into is, what good ground of hope I can discern that I may be saved, as I am a protestant. And here the first thing I am to consider is, what I mean by the name of *protestant*, as it is owned by the members of the church of England, and as I can heartily answer to it.

By a protestant, I understand no other but a Christian, adhering firmly both in faith and practice to the written word of

God, and protesting both against the faith and practice of the papists, and all others whatsoever, so far only as they are either repugnant to the holy scripture in any thing, or ungrounded on the same in things pretended by them necessary to salvation. Such protestants do we of the church of England profess ourselves to be, as is apparent unto all, from the sixth of our Thirty-nine Articles, affirming, "That the scriptures contain all things necessary to salvation; so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of faith, or to be thought requisite or necessary to salvation."

This is our very first principle, as we are called *protestants*, and such an one I do heartily profess myself; neither see I yet the least cause to doubt of my salvation, whilst by the grace of God I live answerably to this profession. For that the protestant religion, built upon this principle, is a safe religion, is, I think, altogether as plain, as that Christianity itself, pure and unmixed, is the way to salvation; because it is plain, that this religion we profess, holding to this principle, can be nothing else but pure and unmixed Christianity, being that, and no other, which is contained in the holy scripture.

Is then the holy scripture the word of God, or not? Was it given unto us of God to be the rule of our religion, that is, of our faith, worship, and holy conversation, or was it not? If Bellarmine[a] may be credited, this is the declaration of the catholic church, both in the third council of Carthage, and also in that of Trent. The books of the prophets and apostles are the true word of God, and the sure and stable rule of life: and, as he shortly after adds, the most sure and safest rule. Now, whether it be the complete, perfect, and adequate rule, as we constantly affirm, or only a partial rule, or but some part of it, as the papists contend, itself, when diligently consulted, will be best able to inform us. For it is on all hands granted to be the word of God, which cannot lie; and therefore unquestionably true in all things whatsoever it teacheth us; and of those many excellent things which it very plainly teacheth, its own perfection and sufficiency is one, and for my present satisfaction very considerable.

[a] De Verb. Dei, l. 1. c. 1.

I find, in the first place, that God himself writ the Ten Commandments, the complete rule of piety and justice, with his own finger, Exod. xxxi. 1, 18. Deut. ix. 10. and x. 2, 4; that he commanded them to be *written on the posts and gates*, Deut. vi. 9. and xi. 20; that Moses *wrote all the words of the Lord*, Exod. xxiv. 4, and delivered the writings to the priests to be read unto the people, Deut. xxxi. 9; and that the king was to have by him a copy of it for his direction, Deut. xvii. 18. I find many curses denounced against the breakers of it, Deut. xxviii. 58, and blessings promised to them that keep it, Deut. xxx. 10. I find it was expressly forbidden *to add unto it*, or *to diminish from it*, Deut. iv. 2, 12, 32; to *turn from it to the right hand or to the left*, Josh. i. 7; and that the good kings were careful to order all things according to it, and to reform what has been amiss by it, 1 Chron. xvi. 40. 2 Kings xxii. 13. And therefore I do not wonder to hear the Psalmist saying, *The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul*, Psal. xix. 7; nor to find Isaiah sending men *to the law*, and *to the testimony*, saying, *If any speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them*, Isa. viii. 20.

Again, I find our blessed Saviour himself, and his apostles after him, very frequently appealing and referring their hearers to that which had been written in the books of Moses, in the Psalms, and in the Prophets: *They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them*, saith Abraham in the parable, Luke xvi. 29. *Search the scriptures*, saith Christ, John v. 39, *for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me.* I find that St. Luke, writing his Gospel, gives his Theophilus this good reason for it; *That thou mightest know the certainty of those things wherein thou hast been instructed*, Luke i. 4: *the things which are most surely believed among us*, v. 1: *all things of which himself had perfect understanding from the very first*, v. 3. I find St. John, who wrote last of all the apostles, affirming, that though Jesus *did many other signs which are not written in that book* of his, yet *these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name*, John xx. 30, 31. And, finally, I find St. Paul asserting the perfection of the holy scripture as fully and plainly as any man can speak, 2 Tim. iii. 15–17, saying, that

the holy scripture *is able to make a man wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus;* that *all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.* Now what more can we desire than to be *made wise unto salvation?* And we are here plainly told, that the holy scripture is able to make us so. What more can be needful to direct us in the way to salvation, than what we may learn from the scripture? It is profitable for our information and establishment in the truth, for the confutation of error and heresy, for the correction of vice and wickedness, for our instruction in righteousness. It is so profitable for all these purposes, that thereby the man of God, the pastor and teacher, may be made complete, and well furnished for all the branches of his office, all the works of his holy calling. In short, it is able to bring us to faith in Christ Jesus; and *whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life,* John iii. 16.

Furthermore, from the same scripture I also learn, that unwritten or oral tradition hath ever been found too deceitful a thing to be relied on for so great a matter as salvation. I find that before the flood, notwithstanding the long lives of men, the few principles of natural religion, and the easiness of learning and remembering things so agreeable to human nature, yet *all flesh* had soon *corrupted his way upon the earth,* Gen. vi. 12. and *every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart was only evil continually,* ver. 5. And after the flood, the whole world was quickly overrun with idolatry: so ill was the doctrine which had been preached by Noah and his sons preserved by oral tradition. Nay, I find, that after God was pleased to give the Jews his will in writing, their teachers had so corrupted the doctrine of God with their traditions, that it was a great part of our blessed Saviour's business to rescue it from those traditional corruptions. He reproves the Scribes and Pharisees for *transgressing the commandments of God by their traditions,* Matt. xv. 3, shewing them how they had made it of none effect by the same, ver. 6, and that *in vain they worshipped God, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men,* ver. 9. And St. Paul warns the Colossians to beware of

being deceived through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. Col. ii. 6. And the special occasion of writing most of the Epistles, yea, and the Gospels too, seems to be the danger that Christians were in of being seduced by false teachers, from the doctrine of Christ and his apostles, under the pretence of tradition. Such were the *wolves in sheep's clothing*, Matt. vii. 15; *false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ*, 2 Cor. xi. 13; *pretending to another gospel*, Gal. i. 6; *men of sleight and cunning craftiness, lying in wait to deceive*, Eph. iv. 14.

From what I find in the scripture, I must needs conclude, till I be better informed, that it is a sufficient rule for us to go by; and that, so long as we hold us to it alone, in our faith and practice, there can be no necessity of resorting to the church of Rome, for that unto which our Bibles at home can direct us. The scripture is the word of God, and sure rule of faith, saith the infallible church of Rome, if Bellarmine may be believed. This holy scripture is able to *make us wise unto salvation*, saith this infallible scripture; and we take no other but this holy and infallible scripture for the rule of our faith and religious practice, say we protestants. What now should hinder me to infer from hence, that if the scripture be the word of God, we protestants are very well as we are; for we have the word of the infallible God, and if it may stand us in any stead, the word of the infallible church (as she will needs be accounted) to assure us, that adhering to the holy scripture, we are in the ready and sure way to salvation.

Further yet, as I am a protestant of the church of England, I do declare, in the words of our eighth article, "That the three creeds, Nice Creed, Athanasius Creed, and that which is commonly called the Apostles' Creed, ought thoroughly to be received and believed, for they may be proved by most certain warrants of holy scripture." Seeing then we receive and thoroughly believe the same creeds, and no other, which the church of Rome herself professeth to believe, and which were thought by the catholic church of Christ, for above four hundred years after the first planting of Christianity, to contain all points of faith necessary for the salvation of Christians, I think I have hence gathered this further confirmation of my as-

surance, that we protestants are in the direct way to salvation; that we are of the very same religion, and no other, in all the necessary points of Christian faith, whereof the catholic church evidently was in the first and purest ages of it. In the four first general councils, no other articles of faith were held needful to be believed by Christians but those of these creeds, which we entirely own and believe. Either then it is true that these three creeds contain all necessary points of Christian faith, or it is not. If it be true, we are safe enough, and can with no colour of reason be said to err in faith, or to deserve the name of heretics. If it be not true, then were all those primitive Christians as much heretics as we are, and knew no more than we do, what belonged to the salvation of Christians. And strangely partial is the church of Rome in approving the faith of those councils, which one of their most famous popes and saints is said to have reverenced as the four Gospels, and yet to condemn ours, though in all points the very same: especially when the third of those councils, held at Ephesus, in the time of pope Celestine, did expressly decree, "That it should not be lawful to utter, write, or compose any other faith, besides that which had been defined by the holy fathers congregated in the Holy Ghost in the city of Nice." Ordering that all they should be punished "who tendered any other to such as had a desire to be converted to the knowledge of the truth, whether they were Gentiles, Jews, or of any other heresy." Whereby it is plain, that the fathers in this third council did conclude that creed to comprehend the entire faith of a Christian. And indeed a man would think that the council of Trent had in the beginning of it been altogether of the same mind, when of the same creed it thus declared itself; "That it is that principle wherein all that profess the faith of Christ do necessarily agree, and the firm and only foundation against which the gates of hell shall not prevail."

I may, I think, upon these considerations, without more ado, be very well satisfied of the safety of the protestant religion. The papists themselves must grant, that whatsoever we believe or practise as of necessity to salvation, really is so; and therefore, that we do not err either in our faith or practice, whilst we live according to our own principles: for if we err in either, so far do they err also: and not they only, but

all the Christian world. And here we may press them with their own way of arguing, and to much more purpose, than they are wont to use it against us. When they would convince us that their religion is the safer, they are wont thus to argue: "That religion is the safer, wherein, by the confessions of both sides, a man may be saved: but both sides confess, that a man may be saved in the popish religion; and both sides do not confess that a man may be saved in the protestant religion; therefore the popish religion is the safer." Supposing now this way of arguing for the safety of their religion, from the confession of both parties, be of any strength, as they must suppose it to be, who so often and confidently use it, then must the like argument, from the same medium, be altogether as strong for us. I would only beg of them to grant me this, (and I hope they will not say my request is unreasonable,) that that religion is the safest, all the doctrines whereof are the truest. If they will not grant me this, they must grant it safer to hold some false doctrines, than all true. But if they think this absurd, then must they give me leave thus to argue: "That religion is the safest, wherein all doctrines held or taught, as necessary to salvation, are, by the confession of both sides, certainly true. Now both sides confess that all doctrines, held or taught in the protestant religion, are certainly true; and both sides do not confess that all doctrines held and taught in the popish religion are certainly true; therefore the protestant religion is the safer. The same articles of faith, the same rules and precepts of life, the same acts of religious worship, the same holy sacraments, the same holy orders of ministers, which we have, the very same have they also. But they have many things, of all these sorts, which we have not; no, nor any other Christians, but those of their own communion. And therefore, to strengthen my argument yet more, I say, if that doctrine and practice be the safest, wherein all good Christians agree, we are sure that ours is the safest, because all good Christians do agree in them; and that theirs is not safe, because all good Christians do not agree in them. Nay, let me add this more: our religion is either safe and true, in all things pretended by us necessary to salvation, or there is no such thing as a safe and true Christian religion in the world visibly professed; and if so, it will follow that Christ hath no true

visible church upon earth, which I am confident no papist will say. The consequence is plain, because all Christians, all the world over, that make any figure of a church, hold the same both faith and practice with us, in what we account necessary to salvation, the church of Rome itself not excluded.

Though it be very certain, that we positively and affirmatively hold nothing in faith or practice as necessary to salvation, but what is held by the church of Rome herself, and all other Christian churches; yet will not the men of that church allow us any possibility of being saved whilst we are protestants. And he, who of late hath been at some pains to represent the papist to us in his fairest dress, hath laboured as hard in this point as in any other, to shew that his church is not uncharitable in the doctrine she delivers concerning our desperate estate. Now although I am not inquiring whether this doctrine be charitable or uncharitable, but only whether it be true or false; yet for my better satisfaction, I will examine all that he saith to this purpose.

He tells us, his church doth nothing herein but what she hath learned of Christ and his apostles. And if he can shew me this, I must needs be fully satisfied, being verily persuaded they never taught any thing uncharitable or untrue. To shew this, he tells us how Christ, Mark xvi. 16, hath said, *He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned.* And this is all his church delivers in this point. If this be all she delivers, we cannot call her uncharitable for it, for we ourselves willingly subscribe to this sentence of our blessed Saviour. Only we think he did not here teach and authorize the church of Rome to say, that all who are not of her faith and communion shall be damned, though she knows they believe all that Christ sent his apostles to teach them. I do not find in the Roman ritual, that the church of Rome, in the baptizing either of infants or adult persons, uses or requires any other confession of faith but that only of the Apostles' Creed, which is the same we use; and if to believe and be baptized in this faith be enough for the salvation of papists, why is it not enough also for protestants? And if the additional articles of the Trentine faith and pope Pius his creed be necessary to salvation, why is there no mention made of them in the Roman order of baptism?

He adds that of St. Paul, 1 Tim. iv. 1, 2, 3, where fortelling of some who in later times would come and preach a doctrine, *forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats which God hath created to be received;* he brands them with the infamous title of *men that depart from the faith; giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.* And several other places of scripture he then produceth, to shew that heretics, such as they that affirmed the resurrection to be passed already, or denied that Jesus is the Christ, &c., are in a state of condemnation. Other texts of scripture he brings, wherein Christians are charged to be unanimous, and condemned for causing strife and divisions, warned to maintain unity, and not to hearken to *false teachers and seducers*, &c. But I find not by all this that St. Paul, or any of the apostles, taught the church of Rome, which both forbids to marry, and commands to *abstain from meats allowed of God;* which teacheth divers doctrines, whereof we find not any thing in the scripture to condemn those for heretics, that adhere wholly to the doctrine of the scripture; or for schismatics, who hold communion with all Christians, so far as they keep to the doctrine of Christ and his apostles; and divide from the church of Rome no further than in those points only wherein they cannot hold her communion and the doctrine of Christ too. I do not see, but after the same rate as he here defends the charity of his church, he might also defend her justice, if she should pretend, that because Christ commanded his disciples to fetch him another man's ass and her colt, she did but what he taught, in taking away other men's goods, and giving no other reason for it but this, that she hath need of them.

What the papists say more, to shew that we can have no saving faith, is one of these two things: either, first, that it is not an entire faith, there being, as they say, many articles which we believe not; or, secondly, that it is no right-grounded faith, seeing it is not built upon sufficient authority, that is to say, on the authority of the catholic church.

Their first objection to the protestant faith is this, that it is no entire faith. And here I am told by the representer, "there is no more hopes for one that denies obstinately any one point of catholic faith, though he believes all the rest; than there is for one that keeps nine of the commandments, with

the breach of the tenth." Now this seems to me no great encouragement to change the communion of the church of England for that of Rome, if an entire faith and an entire obedience be but equally necessary. I wish, with all my heart, I could be as sure that the church of Rome doth not break the first commandment, by her invocation of saints, and adoration of the host; and the second commandment, in her adoration of images and the cross; as I am sure that the church of England neither obstinately denies any article of the catholic faith, nor countenanceth the breach of any one of the ten commandments, as that church seems too much to do, whilst she takes no little care that the people may not know them all.

We steadfastly believe the whole scripture, so far as we are able to understand it, explicitly; and when we do not, implicitly; we receive the three creeds, which have ever been thought to contain the entire faith of a Christian: wherein then is our faith partial or defective? I must consider that anon: at present, seeing obstinacy, according to our adversaries, is a necessary ingredient of an heretic, I can easily assure myself, though I do not see how it is possible for me to satisfy them, that I am no heretic; for I certainly know that I am very desirous to be thoroughly informed, and to be brought to a right understanding of all necessary truths; and am still in a readiness, and full preparation of mind, to believe any one or all of their articles, whensoever they shall please to prove the truth of them, either by scripture, or by unquestionable apostolical tradition. I am sure, therefore, I deny not obstinately any one point of catholic faith. But till they vouchsafe me the proof I desire, I must content myself with the scripture, which is *able to make me wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus*, and not in the pope of Rome, nor in the Roman church.

And yet I find that it is for this especially that we are called heretics, that we adhere only to the scripture; and that they often explain their meaning in bestowing that title on us, by calling us *scripturists* and *gospellers*; and ridicule us for talking of only scripture. But when I consider that this is the fundamental heresy wherewith we are charged, I cannot but a little wonder at it, and find less cause than ever to think we

can be heretics indeed, or that they can call us so any otherwise than in jest. Can they grant the scripture to be the word of God, and the gospel to be *the power of God unto salvation;* and yet in earnest call us heretics for being scripturists and gospellers? If submitting our faith in all things to the scripture we can be heretics, then must the scripture teach heresy, and cannot be the word of God. What a contradiction is this in papists, to call us *scripturists* and *heretics;* which is in effect to say, that we adhere only to the infallible truth of God, and yet are guilty of obstinate error in the faith.

What is it then wherein our faith is defective? It is in this, that we do not believe all that the church of Rome propounds to be believed. This indeed would make us papists, but whether it would make us better Christians than we are already, is not so certain. "A papist," saith the representer, "is one that lives and believes what is prescribed in the council of Trent." But this rule of the papists' faith came into the world (as we think) too late, almost by fifteen hundred years, to be the rule of the Christian faith; and therefore he could not have represented his religion to us with a greater disadvantage than here he doth. We cannot conceive how so small a handful of prelates, most of them Italians, sworn vassals to the bishop of Rome, assembled together at Trent, fifteen hundred years after Christ's preaching, and wholly limited and directed in all their proceedings by the will and command of him, whose authority was the principal thing in question, and submitting all at last to him alone, should come by that immense authority, to command the faith of the Christian world, or what commission they could shew from Christ, the supreme Lawgiver, to prescribe laws of faith and life to all Christendom. And we can as little conceive, how this pretended council could at once confirm all the general councils, and, among the rest, that of Ephesus before mentioned; yea, and declare the Nicene Creed to be the firm and only foundation, and yet, contrary to the decree of that Ephesine council, and not very consistently to its own declaration, decree so many more points than that Creed contains, as necessary to be believed. Moreover, if this be the great oracle we must consult, as our surest guide to heaven, where must we meet with him that can give us the certain sense of its general and ambiguous responses? The learnedest

of the Romish church are not yet well agreed about it; and if the English representer, or French expounder, have had the luck to hit it, I am sure that many heretofore, who thought themselves as wise as either of them, have strangely missed it: or else that council, and the religion called *popery*, hath several faces for several times and countries, and in one place and time shall look like itself, and in another shall be made to look as like the protestant religion as the artificial painter dares make it. But that which here puts us to a stand is this, that as the pope at first taught that council to speak, so hath he reserved the interpretation of its decrees to the see apostolic, or himself only; and he is not always pleased in plain terms to let us know his mind; and if he should for once speak out plainly, it will be a little hard for him to assure us that none of his successors hereafter shall contradict him, unless he can satisfy us that he has as well the gift of prophesying as that of defining and interpreting.

However, it is for not believing the new articles of Trent that we are accounted heretics, and out of the way to heaven. And the reason is, because these articles are supposed to be as firmly grounded on the word of God as any of those old ones which we believe; "for the word of God," saith the council of Trent, "is partly contained in the books of scripture, and partly in traditions unwritten; these are to be received with the same affection of piety and reverence;" and therefore he that disbelieves any article grounded upon unwritten tradition, is no less a heretic, than he that disbelieves what is written in the books of scripture. If I knew how to be satisfied concerning the authority of this council, I could easily tell what credit I should give to this, which it so confidently affirms. But so long as I cannot discern the reason of its pretended authority, I am a little apt to suspect that it was not the clearness of this principle that moved it to make so many either unscriptural or antiscriptural decrees, but rather the desire it had of vindicating its unscriptural doctrines and practices, that made it necessary to espouse such a principle. And indeed when I well consider it, I am not a little comforted by it; that this equalling unwritten tradition with scripture, which is the very basis of the Romish religion, is one of the most incredible things in the world of itself, and as destitute of any

tolerable evidence whence it may gain any credit to itself. It must needs seem very strange to any considering man, that the wise God should leave us a rule in writing, on purpose to direct us how to honour him, and attain unto salvation; and give it this commendation, that *it is able to make wise unto salvation*, and yet omit a great many things altogether as necessary to those ends as those that are written; and without the belief and practice whereof, those that are written can no whit avail us, and yet never so much as once tell us, in all that writing, whither we should go to seek and learn them: nay, that he should omit therein the principal point of all, and without which all that is either written or unwritten can signify nothing; that is, to tell us that the Romish church is the only true church, the only sure and infallible interpreter of all that is written, and the only faithful keeper of all that is unwritten; from the mouth whereof we must receive all saving truth. This, I think, is a thing that must needs be very hard for any one to believe, that believes the infinite wisdom, goodness, and veracity of God. And how it can ever be made evident that there are such necessary unwritten traditions, or that these which the church of Rome holds are they, I think no man living can imagine. I am sure, if the papists' way of reasoning be good, it is safer not to believe this. For all sides consent, that the scripture which we have is the certain word of God; but all sides are not agreed that unwritten traditions are the word of God; therefore it is safer to believe the scripture only to be the word of God, and not traditions. We hold us to scripture, and the papists grant that to be the safest rule: their greatest strength lies in unwritten, or (as they are wont to speak) oral and practical traditions; which, in plain English, is no more but report and custom; and whether there can reasonably be thought any certainty in these, equal to that of the written word of God, given by Divine inspiration, can be no hard matter for a very weak understanding to determine.

That which makes these unwritten traditions of the less credit with me, is the assurance I have that a pretence to them, and a vain confidence in them, hath produced much error and division in the church. It is well known how far and how long the errors of the millenaries, and of administering the eucharist to infants, (to mention no more,) prevailed on

this account. And the early schisms betwixt the Roman and Asian churches about the keeping of Easter; and the hot contests between the Roman and African churches about rebaptizing heretics, were occasioned and upheld by pretences on all hands to tradition. This was the only refuge of old for heretics, when they were confounded by the scripture, to take shelter under tradition; whence Tertullian [b] called them *lucifugas scripturarum*, "men who shunned the light of the scriptures." Again, saith he, "They confess indeed that the apostles were ignorant of nothing, and differed not among themselves in their preaching; but they will not have it that they revealed all things to all, for some things they delivered openly to all, some things secretly and to a few; and that because St. Paul useth this saying to Timothy: *O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust.* And again, *that good thing which is committed to thee, keep.*" Irenæus [c] also makes mention of heretics, who affirmed, "That out of the scriptures the truth could not be found by them who understood not tradition, because it was not delivered by writing, but by living voice;" for which cause also Paul said, *We speak wisdom among them that are perfect.* St. Augustin, in his 97th tract upon John, saith, "That all the most foolish heretics, who desired to be accounted Christians, used to colour their audacious fictions with a pretence from that sentence of the gospel, John xvi. 10, *I have many things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them now.*" Thus did the heretics of old both plead tradition, and sought to strengthen their plea by such places of scripture as these; which are the very same that the papists produce to the same purpose, as may be seen in Bellarmine and others.

But I find that the orthodox fathers of the church were of another mind: "The things which we find not in the scriptures," saith St. Ambrose, "how can we use them?" Ambr. Offic. l. 1. c. 23. "Let those of Hermogenes his shop," saith Tertullian [d], "shew that it is written. If it be not written, let them fear that woe designed for those that add or take away." Irenæus saith [e], "That what the apostles had preached, the same afterwards, by the will of God, they delivered unto us in

[b] Tertul. de Præscr. c. 25. [c] Iren. contra Hær. l. 3. c. 2. [d] Tert. adv. Hermog. c. 22. [e] Iren. l. 3. c. 1.

the scriptures, to be the foundation and pillar of our faith." St. Hierom, against Helvidius, calls the holy scriptures "the only fountain of truth." "Let us bring," saith St. Austin[f], "for trial, not the deceitful balances, where we may hang on what we will, and how we will, at our own pleasure; saying, this is heavy, and this is light; but let us bring the Divine balance of the holy scriptures, and in that let us weigh what is heavier; nay, let us not weigh, but let us own the things already weighed by the Lord." And elsewhere, "The holy scripture," saith he, "fixeth the rule of our doctrine." And indeed the excellent sayings of the ancients to this purpose are so well known, that I should be very vain to cite any more here.

If now, after all this, I should suppose, what I can by no means yet grant, that God having ordered the scriptures to be written, and said so much in the commendation thereof, they do not yet contain all things necessary to salvation, but that some part of those necessary things (as both some heretics of old, and papists now would have it believed) was only whispered privately into the ears of the apostles, as mysteries unfit at that time to be communicated to vulgar Christians; and that the apostles (though they were commanded by Christ to *preach upon the housetops that which he had told them privately in the ear*, Matt. x. 27.) did not yet think themselves obliged to obey this command in writing all that was necessary, but rather to conceal for a time a considerable part of that mysterious doctrine. Yea, suppose that this was one principal use of St. Peter's keys, to lock up all these mysteries in the cabinet of the church's breast, (let the church signify what it can,) to be communicated to the world in after-ages by piecemeal, so as she should find men prepared by a blind credulity to receive them. Yet after all, I must needs think that we are too hardly dealt with to be called heretics, for not believing these things till something be produced, whereby we may be assured either that these things which they commend to us, come indeed from Christ and his apostles, or that we are obliged to take the church of Rome's word for a good assurance. It seems to me a very unreasonable thing, that we should be condemned as obstinate, for not believing things never suffi-

[f] Aug. l. 2. contra Donat.

ciently proved, whilst we know and declare ourselves prepared in mind to yield upon the first rational conviction. Why should not that church have the charity to forbear her censures till she hath tried the strength of her arguments? Why was the council of Trent, contrary to the custom of other councils, so liberal of her curses and so sparing of her reasons? One good reason would do more to make us of her communion than a thousand anathemas. Would not a man suspect that they have no good reasons to shew, who keep them so close? The plain truth is, there have been such vain pretences to tradition in all ages, one contradicting another, that it seems impossible in this age to discern between true and false. Did not Clemens Alexandrinus call it an *apostolical tradition*, that Christ preached but one year? And did not Irenæus pretend a tradition, descending from St. John, that Christ was about fifty years old when he was crucified? And do the papists account either of these to be true? Many things might be named, which for some time have been received as apostolical traditions, which the church of Rome will not now own to be so. And those which she owns, she can no more prove to be so, than those she hath rejected. It were easy to shew this, even from abundance of their own writers, who assert the perfection of the scripture, and complain of the mischief this pretence to traditions hath done; and who confess, they cannot be proved to come from the apostles. But I shall now content myself with the ingenuous confession of the bishops assembled at Bononia, in their council given to pope Julius the Third. "We plainly confess," say they, "among ourselves, that we cannot prove that which we hold and teach concerning traditions, but we have some conjectures only." And again; "In truth whosoever shall diligently consider the scripture, and then all the things that are usually done in our churches, will find there is great difference betwixt them: and that this doctrine of ours is very unlike, and in many things quite repugnant to it." What said Erasmus long since on the second Psalm: "They call the people off," saith he, "from the scriptures unto little human traditions, which they have honestly invented for their own profit." And Peter Sutor, a bitter adversary of his, hath these words: "Since many things are delivered to be observed, which are not expressly found in holy scripture, will not un-

learned persons, taking notice of these things, easily murmur; complaining that so great burdens should be laid upon them, whereby the liberty of the gospel is so greatly impaired? Will they not also easily be drawn away from the observance of ecclesiastical ordinances, when they shall find that they are not contained in the law of Christ?" And must we be heretics for not believing these so uncertain traditions? Must our faith be accounted defective, and not entire, merely because we do not believe what no man can make us understand to come from God? This seems very hard.

It is now time for me to consider the second objection made against our faith, which is, that it is not rightly grounded, it is not built on the authority of the church, that is, the church of Rome. And indeed so much weight I find laid upon this one point, that I have some reason to think, that they who have been very forward at all times to give such liberal allowances of implicit faith to their friends at home, would be contented with a very small measure of explicit belief in us, if we would once be taught to ground our faith aright, on the sole authority of that church. It seems to me, that for the talk about it, they are no such rigid exactors of an entire explicit faith in order to salvation, but that if we will explicitly believe this one fundamental point, the supreme authority of the Roman church over all Christians, they would deal very favourably with us in most others; and excuse our ignorance easilier than they can persuade us to be content to be ignorant. I think I have very good reason to believe this, because I know they can have no reason to reject them that believe but this one point; for when once this great gobbet is swallowed down, the passage will be so well opened, that all other points of faith either go down with it, or will slip after it, without the least straining or grutching. The authority of God himself, speaking in scripture, will be of no further consideration to us; for that we must suppose to be included in the authority of our mother the church. And whatsoever we shall thenceforward perceive to be the will of our mother, we must without all scruple conclude it to be also the will of our Father. The Representer hath lately told us, that though the scripture (which is the word of our heavenly Father) may be the law, yet the mother, the Roman church, is the judge. "Having learned from her

the sense of the scripture, we are obliged to submit to this, and never presume on our own private sentiments, however seemingly grounded on reason and scripture, to believe or preach any new doctrine opposite to the belief of the church." And there is reason for this, if it be true which he elsewhere tells us[g], "That a man may very easily frame as many creeds as he pleases, and make Christ and his apostles speak what shall be most agreeable to his humour[h], and suit best with his interest, and find plain proofs for all" (he means in scripture); "the truth whereof (as of all other points of doctrine) stands," as he saith, "upon the same foundation of the church's tradition, which if it fail in one, leaves no security in any." This is indeed to advance the church to the very top branch of all authority, and to make the holy scripture as very a nose of wax, and as leaden a rule, as any of that church ever thought it; seeing a man may form and work it into creeds of all fashions, and find plain proofs in it for any odd humour, or carnal and worldly interest. This then, as far as I can learn by him, is the only way for me to be a thorough papist, and a good catholic, I must lay aside my reason and the scripture, and heed no more what either of these tell me; only I must have my ear open to the voice of the church, and be wholly at her teaching and command, and I shall be safe enough.

Upon the most serious consideration of the character which the papist is pleased to give us of himself, I cannot find what it is for which they of that church are so severely bent against us protestants; save only that we will not, like tame animals, without any understanding of our own, learn to come and go at a whistle; or trot on the road as we are driven, and stoop to take on our backs whatever load it shall please the Roman church to lay upon us, confessing her to have absolute and uncontrollable authority over our faith. "The standing out against the catholic church makes men heretics, and without erring against this, no man is guilty of heresy," said the Jesuit Fisher, in his answer to certain questions propounded to him by king James I. This then is the only heresy, to disown the authority of the Roman (for that he calls the catholic) church. "Again," saith he, "one fundamental error of the

[g] Pap. Repr. p. 35. [h] Ibid. p. 37, 38

protestants, is their denying the primacy of St. Peter and his successors, the foundation which Christ laid of his church, necessary for the perpetual government thereof." And again, "He that forsakes the church puts himself into a dead and damnable state, and may have all things besides salvation and eternal life." Bellarmine[i] speaks out, and tells very plainly, "No man can, though he would, be subject to Christ, and communicate with the celestial church, that is not subject to the pope." If then we believe this authority of the Roman church, we believe all; and if we believe not this, we believe nothing at all, in the papists' account; or to any better purpose than to our own damnation. So that without this belief, our faith shall never pass for an entire faith; and when we once believe this, it shall never be any more questioned whether it be entire or no.

Now it seems a very hard matter to believe this great point of faith, till very good reasons be given us for it; and yet, it should seem, the want of such reasons will not excuse us from being heretics, and in a state of damnation, no not though we be never so ready to believe it, when we have reasons given us for it. "For he is an heretic," we are told[k], "who thinks any thing against the definition of the church; yet stands so affected, that he will think the contrary if he be convinced by arguments, or if the matter be propounded to him by a learned man." And on the contrary, if we do believe this, we can hardly be heretics, whatever errors we believe, or this belief draws us into. "For if a rustic," saith Cardinal Tolet[l], "believe his bishop about the articles of faith, teaching him some heretical doctrine, he merits by believing, although it be an error. So weighty a point is this, of believing the authority of the Roman church, and grounding our entire faith upon it, that I perceive I am concerned above all things to examine it thoroughly: and this I shall have fitter opportunity to do, now I am come to the second thing propounded.

SECT. II.

Hitherto I have been considering, what ground I have to hope for salvation, as I am a protestant, and of the church of

[i] Bellarm. de Eccles. l. 3. c. 5. [k] Bonacin. de Censur. D. 2. q. 5. p. 1. from Vasquez and others. [l] Tol. Instruct. Sacerd. l. 4. c. 3.

England. I am now, in the next place, to inquire, whether I can find any reason to believe that the church of Rome can put me into a more hopeful way to it should I turn papist, and be of her communion. Now seeing I have already found, that the great reason why we are held uncapable of salvation as now we are, is this, that we have no entire faith; and the defect of our faith is this, that we believe not all the articles of the Roman faith; and that which makes it necessary for us to believe all those articles, is the authority of the catholic, that is, as they interpret, the Roman church, to declare and define what things are necessary to the salvation of Christians; I perceive I have no more to do for my full satisfaction in the present inquiry, but to consider what reason I can have for the owning and submitting to this authority. And to discern this, I think this method fittest to be taken; I will inquire into three things:

I. What things are implied in that submission to this authority, which is required of me.

II. What the grounds and reasons are whereon this authority is founded, and which should persuade me to submit.

III. Where this authority may be found, and to whom I must submit.

And this is all, I think, that I need to do; for I can never think fit to submit my faith and conscience, and to trust my salvation to an authority, which either requires of me such things as are unreasonable, or can produce no reason for itself, or is so lodged in obscurity as it cannot be found.

I. I cannot leave the communion of the church of England, and enter into that of Rome, in obedience to an authority which commands me to do things unreasonable, agreeing neither with the nature of mankind, nor with the undoubted principles of religion. If therefore the church of Rome require such things of me, I must be a protestant still, and protest against that authority which she pretends to. And for ought I can yet see, I cannot submit to her authority, but upon the hardest and most unreasonable terms in the world. I must renounce my reason and my judgment, I must no longer trust my senses, I must either lay aside, or learn to speak dishonourably of God's word; I must not believe a word that God hath spoken, without that church's leave; I must em-

brace a religion, for which, according to that church's principle, no reason can be given to convince me; and when I have thus learned to do all things without reason, I must do, what with reason I can never do, believe all men whatsoever, and how piously soever they otherwise live, if they be not of the Roman communion, to be in a state of damnation. If I be deceived in any thing of all this, I shall be very glad to know it; and I have only this to say for myself, that they were Roman catholics, who should know their own religion best, that have deceived me; and if I may be deceived by hearkening to them, whom that church sends abroad to make us converts, I shall be the less encouraged hereafter to embrace her communion upon their persuasions. Whether all, who are already of her communion, either own or know all this, it concerns not me to inquire; but I think it a debt of charity that I owe them, to think (till they tell me the contrary) that they do not; and that, if they did, they would not long continue where they are. However, till they who taught me these things shall either confess their own error, or shew me my mistake, I must needs think them all true; and therefore also account it much safer for me to continue a protestant, than to turn papist, whatever it may seem or be to others.

First, I think nothing can be plainer, than that it is more safe to act like understanding, and discreet, considering men, than otherwise; or, that the religion, which alloweth men so to do, is safer than that which doth not allow it. Now the protestant religion alloweth men to make use of their reason and judgment, to discern between truth and falsehood, good and evil; which the Roman religion (as it seems to me) will not allow; and therefore it must needs be the safer religion.

Christ certainly came not into the world to save sinners by destroying, but rather by restoring and perfecting human nature. His business was not to deprive us of the use of the most noble faculty which God had given us, but to rectify that, and all the rest, after they had been depraved by sin. His gospel was not preached to close up the eye of the soul, the understanding, and so to lead men blindfold to heaven; but *to open men's eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light*, Acts xxvi. 18. The apostle preached, to teach us how to offer unto God

a *reasonable service*, Rom. xii. 1. And Christ expects that *his sheep should be able to discern the voice of him their Shepherd, from the voice of strangers; and avoiding them, to follow him only*, John x. 4, 5. St. Peter exhorts men *to be always ready to give a reason of the hope that is in them*, 1 Pet. iii. 15. And St. Paul bids men *prove all things, and hold fast that which is good*, 1 Thess. v. 21. And St. John exhorts, *not to believe every spirit, but to try the spirits whether they be of God*, 1 John iv. 1. How any man shall be able to do all this, and much more, which as a Christian he is obliged to do, and not be allowed the free use of his reason and judging faculty, I am sure no man can tell me; neither indeed how he can be of any religion at all; for before he can really be of any religion, he must choose it: and choose it he cannot, till he have rationally considered and judged of it, and of the reasons which must move him to the choice of it. And in truth, to deny a man the free use of his reason and judgment in religion, is to turn him into a beast, where he should be most a man; and either to make it impossible for him to be of any religion at all, and to serve God like a man, or else to say in effect, that the Christian religion is altogether a most unreasonable thing, and proper only to unreasonable creatures.

Now the writing men of the Roman church tell us nothing more frequently, than that no private man ought to be allowed to judge for himself in matters of faith; that to allow this, is to set the gate wide open to all heresies; that every man is bound to submit and captivate his understanding and judgment to the judgment of the church, that is, to all the definitions of (as they call it) the Roman catholic church. Whatsoever this church affirms, we must believe to be true; and whatsoever she commands, we must cheerfully obey, seem the thing to our own private reason never so false or never so wicked. We must not dare to examine the truth or lawfulness of her decrees or determinations, though reason and scripture too seem to us to be against them, as we have been lately taught by the Representer; for as we receive from her the books, so from her only we are to receive the sense of scripture. Hence it is that they define a heretic to be one that obstinately opposeth the sentence of the church. The doctrines of Fathers (Bellarmine somewhere tells us) may be ex-

amined by reason, because they teach but as private doctors; but the church teaches as a judge, with all authority, and therefore no man may dispute the soundness of her doctrine. This then is the first step I must take, if I will go over to the church of Rome; I must resolve to see no longer for myself with my own eyes, but give myself up to be led by the church, never questioning the way I am to go in, so long as she leads me. And truly, so far as I am yet able to discern with my protestant eyes, it is but needful to close the eye of reason beforehand, when I am about to go, where I must otherwise see such things as no reason can endure. It was therefore very ingenuously spoken (as I have heard) of Mr. Cressy, when he said, "That the wit and judgment of catholics, is to renounce their own judgment and depose their own wit." Yet if this be true, I must beg his pardon, if I dare not yet imitate his example, or follow him thither, where (according to him) I can have nothing to do but to run headlong upon any thing without wit or fear. Reason he is pleased to call a hoodwinked guide; and following it, all we can hope for is, that we may possibly stumble into the truth or church. Possibly (it should seem) a man may stumble upon it with his eyes in his head; and truly, I dare not pull them out, lest I should stumble on a blind leader, and we should both fall into the ditch.

Secondly, Whensoever I resolve to enter into the Roman communion, I fear I must also bid farewell to my senses, or resolve never any more to trust them, no, not about those things which are the proper objects of sense; to discern which God gave me my senses; and of which it will be impossible for me to have any distinct knowledge without them.

How unreasonable and dangerous a thing this is I must needs be very sensible, if I be not resolved already to hearken no more to my reason. If I must no longer credit my eyes about shape and colour, nor my ears about sounds and words, nor my nose about smells, nor my palate concerning taste, nor my hands and feeling about hot and cold, hard and soft, I shall not know how to believe that God gave me all these instruments of sense to any purpose at all; I am sure I cannot think myself in a comfortable and safe condition. I know not to what end our blessed Saviour should bid St. Thomas *handle and see him*; or how his faith could be thereby confirmed, if

such senses are not to be trusted: nor why the apostles should hope to have the more credit given to their narratives, by telling us *they were eyewitnesses of the things they relate*, 1 Peter i. 16; Luke i. 2. Nor why St. John (1 John i. 1.) should talk so much of *hearing*, *seeing*, and *handling*, as things qualifying them for bearing witness. What a Christian am I like to be, if I can have no assurance of what I see or hear; if I may not trust my eyes when I read the scripture, nor my ears when I hear the instructions of my teachers? How could the first Christians be sure themselves, or assure us, *that Jesus is the Christ*, if in hearing his words, and seeing his miracles, and reading the prophets, they might not safely trust their senses? If sense be not to be trusted, all teaching must be by immediate inspiration: and faith comes not by hearing, as St. Paul affirms it doth; and the infallible church can teach no more than we, except she can teach without speaking or writing, or any thing that is to be understood by hearing or seeing; and so oral and practical tradition can be of no more use to us than to the blind and deaf. On this supposition, I may easily mistake a harlot for my mother, and stumble into Babylon instead of Hierusalem, hearken to the voice of the wolf instead of the shepherd, and eat and drink poison instead of wholesome food, and feel no pain nor loss when my eyes are plucked out.

Now if the church of Rome do not command us to renounce all credit to our senses, she cannot command us to give any credit to her doctrine of transubstantiation. And I fear, without our believing this point, she will not admit us to her communion. We believe already a real presence of that which we see not, yet will not this serve, unless we believe also a real absence of that which we both *see*, *handle*, *taste*, and *smell*. In the holy sacrament of the eucharist, I am commanded to believe that there is not any bread, but flesh; nor wine, but blood; and yet there I see, smell, taste, and feel, both bread and wine, and nothing else. I hear it read, that our blessed Saviour *took*, *blessed*, *brake*, *and gave bread and wine*; and of the same he said, *Take*, *eat*, and *drink*. I hear St. Paul again and again, 1 Cor. xi. 26, 27, 28. speak of *eating* and *drinking* the *bread* and the *cup*. And yet I must not trust any of these five senses, but against the clearest evidence and testi-

mony of them all, I must believe, if I can, that there is neither bread nor wine, but that, which neither my senses can discern, nor my reason conceive, nor doth the scripture any where say, the very natural flesh and blood of Christ, under the colour and form, the taste and smell, and all other proper qualities of bread and wine; and yet neither that colour, nor form, nor taste, nor smell, nor any other accident, which my senses there perceive, are in the flesh and blood, though there is nothing else there for them to be in. That though I break and chew with my teeth what I take and eat, yet I break not, nor chew with my teeth the body of Christ; and yet I take and eat nothing else. If I cannot believe this, I am told that I have not faith enough, and only because I have yet reason and sense too much to be of that communion. This is another step that I must take in going over to the church of Rome. And when I am gone thus far, I may think it seasonable enough to lay aside the scripture too; for what good use I can make of it, without the free use of my reason, and trusting my senses, I do not understand.

Thirdly, If I be a layman, and not of so good credit with the curate or bishop, as to obtain a license; that is, if I will not promise to adhere only to the doctrine of the Roman church, and take all that I read in that sense only, which she is pleased to give it, I must not be suffered to read the scripture at all, but must give away my Bible, upon pain of being denied the remission of my sins. And truly if I may be allowed to read it upon no other terms than of being thus tied up, to learn nothing by it, but what I am beforehand taught without it, I shall think a license too dear, even at a very low rate; if yet it may be obtained, as I find it questioned, whether it may or no, anywhere else, but in such places as a license to read some of their own, may prevent their itch of looking into our translations. However, whether I be of the laity or clergy, if I will learn of them who are most busy in endeavouring my conversion, I am sure I must be taught to speak very dishonourably of the word of God; and this seems to be no more than the religion commended to me requireth.

I must needs here say, that nothing in the world doth (and I think I may say, ought) more to prejudice me against any religion, than to find it constrained in its own defence, to say

undecent things of that which it grants to be the word of God. And if I might be thought worthy to advise the missionaries, they should not harp too much on this ungrateful string, if they would draw any after them that have the least zeal for God's honour. I am verily persuaded, that the good language they bestow upon the scripture, hath kept more out of their church than ever their arguments yet won. I will not now take notice of those too well known encomiums bestowed upon it by some of their communion, calling it a *nose of wax*, a *leaden rule*, a *dead letter*, *unsensed characters*, and I am ashamed to say what more. I shall only observe what is ordinarily taught us, and endeavoured with much art to be proved by their best, most modest, and generally approved authors: as, that the scripture is not necessary; that it hath no authority as to us, but from the church; that it is an imperfect, an insufficient rule; that it is an obscure book, and finally, a very dangerous one to be read by the people.

I know very well that the Representer, and others of them tell us, "that the papist believes it damnable in any one to think, speak, or do any thing irreverently towards the scripture, and that he holds it in the highest veneration of all men living." I know also that most of them, even whilst they are industriously proving all that I but now said, do yet labour to mollify and sweeten their own harsh expressions, which they know must needs grate the ears of all pious persons. I am also verily persuaded that many papists have a venerable esteem for the scripture, and are not a little troubled to hear it reproachfully used. And yet I cannot see that highest veneration for it, or that they speak not very irreverently of it, who speak no worse of it than the Representer himself hath taught them, viz. "That it is not fit to be read generally of all without license;" though he gives this very good reason for it, "lest they should no longer acknowledge the authority of the Roman church;" or, in his own words, "No authority left by Christ to which they are to submit." As though men might be taught by the scripture to be disobedient to any authority which Christ hath set up in his church. I cannot see any great veneration he hath to the scripture, in saying, "They allow a restraint upon the reading of the scriptures, for the preventing of a blind ignorant presumption, or the casting of the holy to dogs, or

pearls to swine," (such too is his respect for Christians,) "that he hath no other assurance that they are the word of God, but by the authority and canon of the church. That almost every text of the Bible, and even those that concern the most essential and fundamental points of the Christian religion, may be interpreted several ways, and made to signify things contrary to one another. That it is altogether silent, without discovering which of all those senses is that intended by the Holy Ghost, and leading to truth; and which are erroneous and antichristian. That a man may frame as many creeds as he pleases, and make Christ and his apostles speak what shall be most agreeable to his humour, and suit best with his interest, and find plain proofs for all. That it alone can be no rule of faith to any private or particular person." Certainly they who talk of the scripture at this rate, have not the highest veneration for it of all men living.

They that say, and labour to prove, that the scripture is not necessary, may well be supposed to think that the church of God might do well enough without it. And though to lessen the odiousness of this assertion, they are forced to confess it is a lie, without the help of some such mental reservation as this; "so that God could not, if he pleased, preserve his truth among men, some other way than by writing it;" yet doth not this speak in the like veneration for the scripture, as protestants have, who downrightly affirm it to be necessary. And it must needs sound ill to say, that the all-wise God hath been very careful to leave and preserve in his church an unnecessary thing. Yea, it is altogether as absurd to say the scripture is not necessary, because God could, if it had seemed good to him, have preserved his church and faith without it, as it would be to say, that ploughing and sowing, or eating and drinking, are not necessary, because God could, if he pleased, make the ground bring forth without the one, and preserve man's life without the other. Nor can it be imagined, that any man, upon this account only, would venture to say, and attempt to prove the scripture not to be necessary in a sense, wherein no man ever affirmed it; if he were not so zealously bent upon lessening the esteem which we have for it, that he will choose rather to say nothing to the purpose, and dispute against nobody, than to be silent, and say nothing that sounds ill of it; and

that he thinks it needful for the ends of his church so to do.

In like manner, when they contend that the authority of the scripture is from the church, which is the thing whereof at every turn they are forward enough to mind us, they are forced again to make some abatements to make it seem a truth. It is true, they say, that, considered in itself alone, it hath its authority from God; whereby they can mean no more but that God is the author of it; but in relation to us, it hath its authority from the church. Now I would fain know, what any man can understand properly by the authority of the scripture, but its relation to us, or the power it hath to command our faith in it, and obedience to it, as the word of God. And if it have all this power from the church, as is confidently affirmed, then though itself be of God, yet all its authority is from the church; and it must needs be true, which was said by one of them, that "it is of no more authority than Livy, or Æsop's Fables, without the church's declaration." Thus is the authority of God's word made to depend upon the authority of men, and all our faith is no more but human faith resting upon human testimony. And if the authority which it hath to oblige us, be from the church, I would know by what authority it doth oblige the church; it is not sure by any authority from her; for then I see no reason why the church may not choose whether she will receive it or no; whilst yet, I think, that it is only by the authority of the scripture that she can pretend to be a church, and to have any authority at all. However, this I am sure of, that they who say the scripture is to be received for the church's sake, have not so high a veneration either for it or the author of it, as they who say it is to be received for God's sake.

And in the next place, whether we, who say the scripture is a perfect and sufficient rule of faith and manners, containing all things necessary to salvation; or they, who say it is but a partial and imperfect rule: we, who say it is plain and easy to be understood in all things necessary; or they, who say it is dark and obscure, unable to inform and resolve learners, doubters, and inquirers, and that even in essentials and fundamentals of religion: finally, whether we, who say it ought to be read and studied of all men; or they, who say it is not

needful, yea, dangerous to be read of all, have the higher veneration for the holy scripture, is no hard matter to determine; if to commend a thing may be said to be more honour to it, than to disparage it. And though here again they use some art and colour to set off such ill-favoured sayings, as well as they can, yet serves this to no other end, in my mind, but to make them more ugly and odious.

They deny not, for all this, they say, the perfection, sufficiency, or plainness of the scripture, nor that it may be read by the people. What then is it they say? They affirm, that it contains all necessary truths, either explicitly, or at least virtually; for some truths it declares expressly, and yet so as the church alone must give the sense; and for all the rest, it plainly (if the church may here also give the sense) sends us to the church to learn them. Now I cannot for my heart imagine what all this can signify, but only a desire to lessen the scripture's authority as plausibly as they can. To me it seems very plain, that they make the scripture just nothing, and the church all in all.

I think it here again well deserves my consideration, that the scripture is very copious in declaring and repeating too, over and over again, many necessary points of faith and duty; and not only necessary things, but many other things also it largely teacheth, which are by all granted to be of less moment and necessity to the salvation of men; and all this it doth in as plain words and phrases as can be used. And hence I find it very hard for me to believe that the Holy Ghost, by whose inspiration it was written, should do all this for our instruction, and that in a book written on purpose to make us wise unto salvation, and by himself declared able so to do, and yet omit many things of greatest necessity to that end; never so much as once, no, not in any obscure manner, pointing out to us that church, to whose authority we must resort and submit. This were to leave us a treasure closely locked up, and not tell us where we may find the key, that can let us in to it, and so we are neither the wiser nor the richer for it.

Whatsoever the papists are pleased to allege for their speaking thus of the word of the blessed God, I confess I cannot think any better of their religion for it. Let us say what we will in commendation of holy scripture, they will be sure to

find something to say against it; lest, I suppose, it should be thought we can at any time speak truth. And when we charge them for speaking dishonourably of the scripture, they so interpret their words, as they seem to say the same that we did, and which they blamed us for. What can be their meaning in this, but either to make the world believe that we are in an error, though, when they come to apologize for themselves, they are forced to confess it a truth; or that their religion necessarily requires it of them in its vindication, to vilify the scripture; though by saying such things of it, as they acknowledge cannot be true, unless interpreted so as to speak our sense? They must therefore in this deal either very disingenuously with us, or very injuriously with the holy scripture. For my part, I cannot believe that men professing the Christian faith, and owning the scripture to be the word of God, could ever be persuaded to speak so, as but seemingly to vilify or disparage it, if their doctrines could be any other way defended. Their religion, I say, must need it, or they too little consult the honour of their religion, in needlessly uttering such speeches as stand in need of a very great measure of charity to think them less than blasphemy.

Fourthly, If any protestant dares venture thus far towards the church of Rome, the next thing he has to do is to resolve not to believe one word that God speaks, without that church's leave. I am confident, that there are not many of our lay papists that think themselves to be under this obligation; and that if they were sensible of it, they would make haste to break loose from it. But for my own part, I see not how I can enter into their communion, but I must draw it upon myself. And this I think would be to advance the Roman church to as great a height in my esteem, as they in her, who are most zealous for her infallibility, can desire. What more would they have, than that God himself, where they confess he speaks, should stand to their church's courtesy, whether or no he should be believed? I know it will be said, they never disallowed any man to believe God: but because all men cannot understand God speaking in the scripture, the church is appointed by him to be his interpreter. This I hear, and to me it sounds not well, that God should speak to men things necessary for all to know, and which he commands all to learn and

believe upon pain of eternal damnation; and yet not speak so intelligibly as they may understand him. Certainly, he that made the tongue, and gave man understanding, can speak, if he please, as intelligibly as the church, which cannot speak or understand at all without his help and teaching. And considering his infinite goodness and impartiality, till he shall tell me so himself, I know not how to believe that he hath so much more respect to the honour of the Roman church than to the salvation of mankind, that he would so deliver things belonging to salvation, that no man can be able to understand, and be the better for them, but he that resorts to that church as God's sole interpreter. And if indeed she be so, it must follow, that we cannot believe one word that God speaks without her leave. For, therefore is she made God's interpreter, because otherwise we cannot understand his word; and I am sure, what we cannot understand we cannot believe. It is the sense, they say, and not the letter, is God's word; and this sense is in the church's breast, and of her alone we must learn it; and therefore, till she give us leave, we cannot believe it, no not so much as that Jesus is the Christ; although, till we believe this, we cannot believe that he hath a church, and therefore cannot believe she is his interpreter.

I will not now inquire into the reasons why this church, which is God's sole interpreter, takes so excellent a course to make her children understand God's word. Why, first, she keeps it in the Latin tongue only, whereof the far greater number of them understand not one syllable? why, secondly, she doth not give them some infallible translation, interpretation, or comment of the scripture, a thing very easy for an infallible interpreter to do? and therefore, in my opinion, must argue a great defect in her charity, and much unfaithfulness in the discharge of her trust, if she do it not. I am loath to ask such questions as these, because I find it goes so much against the hair to answer them. Indeed, I think she doth not the latter for a very good reason, because she cannot; and it is only her vain pretence to such a power, that makes her inexcusable if she do it not. And the former she is concerned to do, that they, who have the word of God only in a language which they cannot understand, may be constrained of necessity to depend upon her instruction, and never to question her

authority, nor discern her errors. Whilst they have nothing of the word of God but from her mouth, they can have no more of it than what she gives them leave to have; and therefore can neither believe a word of what God speaks, nor indeed that he hath spoken any thing, but by her leave.

God speaks very plainly and intelligibly enough in the second Commandment, forbidding the adoration of images as plainly as he forbids to commit adultery, or to steal. And Christ spake very plainly, and as intelligibly, saying, *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve*, Matt. iv. 10. And again, when he said of the eucharistical cup, *Drink ye all of it*, Matt. xxvi. 27, as when he said, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself*. St. Paul very plainly ordereth, that the public worship of God be performed in a known tongue, and sheweth the great absurdity of using an unknown tongue in God's worship, 1 Cor. xiv. And he speaks intelligibly enough when he saith, *Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup*, 1 Cor. xi. 28. To say no more, we think it plainly enough said of them *that die in the Lord*, that *they rest from their labours*, Rev. xiv. 13. In all these things, we hear God speak, and would fain believe him. But here the church of Rome comes in with her authority, and tells us, that though God have said, he only is to be worshipped, we must believe, that not he only, but also the cross, images, saints, and angels, are to have a share in our religious worship: and, say Christ and his apostles what they please to the contrary, we must believe, that not all, but the sacrificing priest ought to drink of the cup; that God's public worship is well performed in an unknown tongue; that we neither eat bread nor drink wine in the eucharist; that all who *die in the Lord* do not *rest from their labours*; but that the most of them go into most dreadful torments. At this rate, for ought I can see, must I believe the word of God, when I have once submitted to the authority of the church of Rome.

Fifthly, It seems very hard for me to conceive how I should be bound, under penalty of eternal damnation, to espouse a religion, and submit to an authority, for which no convincing reason can be given me by them that invite me to it. What is it in any religion, which can commend it before others to a

man's choice, but its truth and goodness? And how should the truth and goodness of any religion commend it to my choice, till they be discovered unto me, and I be rationally convinced that it hath them? Whatever truth and goodness there may really be in the religion called *popery*, I am sure they can be no motives to me to embrace it, till they be clearly laid open to my understanding and judgment, that I may plainly discern them; and therefore, if any papist will take an effectual course to convert me to it, he must by rational means convince me first, that his is the true church, and her doctrines sound and good.

How he can do this upon his own principles, I see not yet; but rather think it a very gross absurdity in him to attempt it. He tells me often, that no private person, such as I am, ought to judge for himself in points of faith, or therein to follow his own private judgment, though to him grounded both on reason and scripture. He must not, therefore, in disputing with me, according to his own doctrine, bring either reason or scripture to convince me, for I must not trust my own private judgment, (and I know no other that I have,) though, as it seems to me, grounded both on reason and scripture. I must not judge for myself by either of them, whether what he commends to me by them be true or no, and then I cannot imagine to what end he useth them in any dispute with me. He must resolve, therefore, for ought I can see, whenever he would convert me, to judge for me too, as well as dispute with me; and then, if I cannot make a right choice for myself, he may do it for me; though, after all, whether his private judgment be any more to be trusted in such a case than my own, I may possibly doubt.

Either it is a matter of faith, that the church of Rome is the only true church, and that she hath this authority of determining for all Christians which is the saving faith of Christ, or it is not. If it be not, I may be safe enough, though I believe it not; and it is ill done of papists to terrify me with these big words, which are as false as terrible, that I cannot be saved without believing this. If it be a matter of faith, then must I either be allowed to judge for myself, by my own private judgment, in a matter of faith, or all the papists' endeavours to persuade me to believe it are altogether vain,

unless it be reasonable for me to believe a thing against my reason and judgment. When he useth arguments, I should think he meant thereby to convince me in my private judgment; but it seems it is only to drive me out of it; and that, if I may use it at all, it is only to this end, that I may conclude I have no use of it. All the arguments in the world cannot convince me, till I judge of them; and therefore no papist can offer me a reason why I should embrace popery, but he must contradict himself, and give me as strong a reason why I should not embrace it, because its principles are false. It will be all one as if he should say, I ought to be convinced by reason, and yet I neither ought nor can be convinced by it. In urging his reasons upon me, he intends they should convince me; in denying me the liberty of judging for myself by reason, he denies that any reasons can convince me; because it is plain they cannot convince me before I have judged of them, and this I must do by my private judgment, or by nothing, for I have no other.

But here I am told, we are allowed to make use of our reason to find out the true church, which may infallibly guide us into all saving truth. All that is required of us is this, that when we have once found this true church, we presume no longer to judge for ourselves, but captivate our reason to the infallible judgment of the church. This is something, and yet it seems but extorted from them, to make a little more plausible what to me seems one of the greatest pieces of folly in the world; I mean, the attempt of convincing men by reason, who must not be allowed to judge of the reasons whereby they must be convinced. I find reason, by a traditionary papist, compared to a dim-sighted man, who used his reason to find a trusty friend to lead him in the twilight, and then relied on his guidance rationally, without using his own reason at all about the way itself. Thus are we allowed reason to find out the church of Rome, our sure friend to guide us, and on whose guidance we must rationally rely, after we have captivated our reason to her, and for her sake have resolved to use it no more. But now, if this reason, which is to direct us to our guide, be such a dim-sighted thing, and, as we heard before, hoodwinked too, so that whilst we follow it, we can have no more hope than only that we may possibly stumble into the catholic

church; who will secure us, that we shall not in this twilight mistake a treacherous enemy for a trusty friend; and then what shall we gain by our rational reliance on him? A dim-sighted man, in the twilight, may easily mistake one thing for another, else should he not much need a trusty guide; and why he may not mistake his guide, as well as his way, I do not yet know.

But that I may be satisfied how much I gain by this liberal concession, to use my reason and private judgment in inquiring after the true church, I will a little consider how the papist is wont to talk with me, when he would persuade me to take his church for my only sure guide. First, he tells me, there is but one true faith; and then, that this faith must be held entirely: next, that this entire faith is nowhere to be found but in the true church. After this he begins again, and tells me, Christ hath a church upon earth; that there is but one true church; that out of it there is no salvation; and, lastly, that the Roman church, and no other, is that one true church, out of which there is no salvation. And till we have found that it is so, he will give us leave to judge for ourselves. And I would thank him for this kindness, if he would allow me to enjoy the benefit of it, and to make any use of it; otherwise it will look but like a mockery. I desire, therefore, some clear convincing evidence that the Roman church is the only true church. He cannot to this purpose produce the consent of all Christians, for two parts in three deny it. Therefore he gives me a great many marks or signs, sometimes more, sometimes fewer, whereby the only true church must be known from others, and spends a great many words in shewing me how they agree to the Roman church, and no other. That wherein I would next have some satisfaction, is, supposing that all his marks agree to the Roman church, and no other, how I may know that these are indeed the certain and incommunicable marks and properties of the only true church? To prove this, he betakes himself to the holy scripture, and brings me thence some texts, whereby he says they are clearly proved to be so. I now, with a very hearty and sincere desire to learn the truth, and with all diligent use of such helps as I can come by, read and consider all these texts, and cannot discern in them any evidence at all of the thing which they are brought to prove;

and therefore think it reasonable yet to call for some clearer proof. But now, when it is come to this, I presently find, that his liberal concession to make use of my reason and private judgment to find out the true church, amounts to no more than I at first suspected, that is, just nothing: for here he retires to his principle of popery, that I being a private person, ought not to judge for myself what is the sense of those texts of scripture, but must submit my reason and judgment to the judgment of the church, (yea, even before I have found the church,) and without any dispute receive the sense of scripture from her alone. Thus he recalls at once all that he had allowed, and undoes again whatsoever he had been a doing to persuade me to his communion. He was giving me reasons, which might convince me in my judgment; and these at length resolve all into the authority of the scripture; and yet of this testimony of the scripture I must not judge; and therefore by it I cannot be convinced of any thing but this, that the church of Rome is resolved to be mistress of all Christians; and thinks it enough to convince us that she is so, if, whilst she sets some of her sons to hold us up in empty talk of scripture and reason to no purpose, she step out from behind the curtain, saying, "Believe it, I am she."

Now I cannot possibly see, whatever others may do, (for I keep yet to my protestant principles of judging for no man but myself,) how I can embrace popery upon any conviction from papists; and I fear I must either take it without any reason for it, or not at all. If I cannot know the Roman church to be the only true church, but by the testimony of the scripture; and if I cannot understand the testimony of the scripture till I receive the true sense of it from the Roman church; and if I cannot take that for the true sense of it, upon her declaration of it so to be, unless moved by her authority, I must be persuaded to do the most unreasonable thing in the world, to my thinking; to believe a church to be the only true church, for her own authority, which I yet know no more than I do her to be the true church, which it is all along supposed I do not know at all: this I think not only unreasonable, but impossible.

I must needs confess myself very hard to be persuaded of the tender goodness of that mother, who, lest her children

should get hurt by the dimness of their sight, will needs pull out their eyes, and keep them in her pocket, till she has taught them to use them better. I am very loath to part with my reason, how dim-sighted soever, because I know not how to serve God without it. Yet if I should dare to venture thus far, may I now have leave to take my rest here? If my dim-sighted reason help me to stumble into my mother's lap, may I yet think myself safe there? Not till I have learned her charity too as well as her faith, which the Representer tells us she learned of Christ and his apostles.

Therefore, lastly, I must believe, that all other Christians but papists are in a state of damnation. The decree of pope Boniface the Eighth, as it now stands in the common Extravagants, is well known to be this: "We declare, say, define, and pronounce, that it is altogether of necessity to salvation, that every creature be subject to the pope of Rome." Pope Pius the Second, in his Bull of Retractation, though he was not altogether of the same mind (as it seems) before, whilst he was Æneas Sylvius, saith, "He cannot be saved that doth not hold the unity of the catholic church." If so lusty a decree and so peremptory a declaration of two popes be too little, there is abundance more to this purpose to be met with by him that has a mind to search for it: I only take notice at this time, that pope Leo the Tenth, in his Lateran council, and his bull therein read and passed, saith, "We do renew and approve the same constitution," (viz. of pope Boniface, but now mentioned,) "the present sacred council also approving it." And lastly, pope Pius the Fourth, in his bull, wherein he confirms the council of Trent, imposeth an oath upon ecclesiastical persons, wherein they swear, "That the holy catholic and the apostolic Roman church is the mother and mistress of all churches; and that this is the true catholic faith, without which no man can be saved." Here is enough in all conscience for us protestants to hear, and too much a great deal, as I think, for any man to believe.

I think myself bound in charity to have the best opinion I can of all men; and therefore I dare not think that all they who are called Roman catholics have thoroughly learned this doctrine. There seems to me to be so much of ill nature in it, that I should think myself the worst natured man in the world,

if I could believe that any considerable numbers of them, besides the priests, are guilty of it. Many piously disposed souls are not so happy as to have always the clearest understandings, or the sincerest teachers, but have better hearts than either heads or guides. Their zeal is too great for both their opportunities of learning and patience to consider: their earnestness of salvation, a thing very laudable in them, puts them into too much haste to deliberate long, and gives an advantage to some, who watch for it, to abuse them. Either a cunning Jesuit or a canting fanatic will hope to make an easy prey of such persons; for it matters not greatly of which sort the tempter be, whilst the temptation is the same: the fish minds not the fisher, but the bait. Every argument from either is edged with a mighty zeal and importunity, and sharpened with the finest and most penetrating expressions of a most tender compassion for perishing souls. Salvation is as confidently promised, as earnestly desired; and whether it be to be had in the Romanist's infallible church, or the separatist's purged and unmixed congregation, all's a case, when once the man is made to think it cannot be had in the church of England. If they who are so easily proselyted either way, would take time to look before they leap, and could but see into the consequents of these very arguments which most prevail with them, and are made the traps to catch them in, they would stand off a little, and ask a few questions more, for their better satisfaction, before they could endure to think of entering into a communion, which would oblige them, as ever they hoped to be saved themselves, to believe that Christ hath no faithful followers upon earth, but a few subjects of the pope of Rome.

I can easily perceive, by divers books written by them who call themselves converts, that the main motive of their going over to the Roman church was this, that they could not hope to be saved in any other: and I find that most arguments of late used to persuade us to that religion, look the very same way; and it is this doctrine alone that hath put me upon this inquiry for my own satisfaction: for I must needs confess that this doctrine, which some account so powerful a persuasive to popery, has always with me had the quite contrary effect to what I find it hath in them; and has been, and is at this present to me, as strong a dissuasive from it. If I can never be

a papist till I can believe it, I am very confident I shall never be one. I would leave the church of England the next minute, should she require of me to believe that all out of her communion were in a state of damnation; and truly I think that most protestants are of my mind.

When therefore I found the Representer in good earnest to vindicate his church in this one point, I presently concluded, that he had writ his whole book to no purpose; for let him spend all his oil and colours in painting popery to the best advantage, so long as this one spot appears in her face, she may possibly seem in her new dress less terrible, but not one jot more lovely. Having told us, that no one can arrive to the true knowledge of the catholic faith, but by receiving it as proposed and believed by the church of Christ; and that the Roman catholic is the only true church; that whosoever denies any article of her faith, denies so much of Christ's doctrine; that whosoever hears her, hears Christ; and whosoever obstinately and wilfully is separated from her, is in the same distance separated from Christ himself; and finally, that *God added to this church daily such as shall be saved:* he hath told us enough to persuade us, that no protestant in the world could have done that church a greater diskindness than he hath done; nor by any misrepresentation of her, have worse represented her.

When the papists are pleased to ask us that unanswerable question, as they account it, Where was your religion before Luther? they wish us withal to take into our serious consideration the state of our forefathers, who lived and died in the religion of the church of Rome; asking us, if we dare think that they were all damned? We need not trouble our heads with shaping an answer to so frivolous a question, because we durst never yet be so hardy as to affirm that all are damned who live and die in the communion of the church of Rome; but do openly declare to the world, that though we think our own religion the safest, yet many of that communion have been heretofore, and many also are at this day, under such circumstances as encourage us to hope very well of them as to their future state. However, if it so well deserve our consideration, what is become of our forefathers? doth it not as well deserve the consideration of the Romanists, what is become of many of

theirs? yea, what will become of the greatest part of the Christian world, who live and die out of their communion? And if they would have us think the worse of the reformation, lest by thinking well of it we should be wanting in charity to our fathers, which yet we are by it no way obliged to be; should it not move them to think the worse of their religion, that it constrains them to think so uncharitably, not only of their fathers, but of all the world but themselves only?

How many most eminent and worthy persons, how many great and famous churches, must I be obliged, by embracing the Roman faith, to believe excluded from salvation! Upon these terms, I cannot see how it is possible for me to be reconciled to the church of Rome, without professing myself an irreconcilable enemy to all the Christian world besides. I must turn Hector, and call all other Christians damned heretics. I must needs say, this appears not to me like that meek and lamb-like spirit of the blessed Jesus, which is given by him to his dove-like spouse, that thus rants it in his pretended vicars and their adherents. It seems not to be much akin to that Christian charity, which *hopeth and believeth all things, and thinketh no evil*, 1 Cor. xiii. 7.

I must make nothing of condemning all protestants and protestant churches, of what other denomination soever; and these alone are no inconsiderable part of Christians. "These heresies," saith Bellarmine, "possess many and ample provinces, England, Scotland, (and why not Ireland?) Denmark, Swedeland, Norway, no small part of Germany, Poland, Bohemia, and Hungary." He might have said also, of France and Helvetia. "It was anciently the custom," saith Tolet[m], "that the pope did three days every year, though now but once a year, viz. upon the Holy Thursday, (he means the Thursday immediately before Easter, called *Cœna Domini*,) with great solemnity, before all the people, thunder out his sentence of excommunication against all heretics, of what name or sect soever; but against the queen of England (which was then queen Elizabeth) by name; with all their believers, receivers, favourers, and defenders; against all that read their books publicly or privately, with what intention soever, or under

[m] Instr. Sacerd. lib. 1. c. 18.

whatever pretence, though there be no error in them, or with a design to confute the error, if there be any, without his holiness's license against the keepers, printers, and defenders, in any manner, of the same; against all schismatics, and such as pertinaciously withdraw themselves, and depart from their obedience to the pope; against any one that shall so much as say that Calvin was a good man; against all that appeal from the orders, decrees, or mandates of the pope, to a future council." And it is very well known that they are not all protestants who have done so.

Neither will this suffice; I must also condemn the whole Greek church, which how ancient, and of how large extent it is, is very well known: and some reason there seems to be for it; "for," saith Bellarmine[n], "the Greeks, in the year 441, in the council of Chalcedon, consisting of 600 bishops, endeavoured to make the patriarch of Constantinople equal to the bishop of Rome." And again; "In the year 1054, they pronounced the bishop of Rome to have fallen from his degree of dignity, and the bishop of Constantinople to be the first bishop." And though he pretends that these Greeks were once reconciled to Rome in the council of Florence, yet he adds, that "they always returned to their vomit." No wonder, therefore, if this Greek church cannot escape damnation: and yet this poor reprobated church yields not to that of Rome in any of her own principal marks of a true church. I read that the Christians of her communion in Natolia, Circassia, Mingrelia, Russia, Greece, Macedonia, Epirus, Thracia, Bulgaria, &c. do very near, if not quite, equal the number of those who are of the Roman communion.

And yet will not this be enough, unless we include in this sentence of condemnation all the Assyrian Christians living among the Mahometans in Babylon, Assyria, Mesopotamia, Parthia, and Media, with the Jacobites, Armenians, Egyptians, Ethiopians, and the vast empire of the Habassines: all these I must look upon as cut off from Christ, merely for their disowning the pope's authority, though they should be found orthodox in all other points. And truly I know not how to get up to that height of boldness, not to be afraid of condemn-

[n] Præfat. de Rom. Pontif.

ing so many Christians, most of which have given, and do yet give to the world the most notable testimony of fidelity to Christ that can be expected, in their constant sufferings for the sake of his holy name and gospel.

After this consideration of whole churches, it seems needless for me to come down to that of single persons, though confessedly of greatest note and eminence in the church of Christ, both for learning and piety. How St. Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, and a famous martyr, who would not obey P. Anicetus, but still keeps his Easter contrary to the custom of the Roman church, and therein either is ignorant of his duty, or as stubborn as any protestant; or how his successor in that see, Polycrates, who defended himself and his church so arrogantly against the authority of the Roman church, more than sufficiently declared by pope Victor, still pleading the example of Polycarp, and authority of St. John, as though he had never heard St. Peter was made prince of the apostles, or that the bishops of Rome were his successors in that authority over all churches: how Irenæus, and all his fellow bishops of the Gallican church, who so presumptuously took upon them to expostulate the matter with the same Victor, and in very homely terms to chide him for excommunicating those Asian Christians for not changing their ancient customs at his command: how St. Cyprian, the holy bishop of Carthage, and martyr, with his bishops of Africa, Numidia, and Mauritania, joining with him in so contumaciously resisting pope Stephen: the sixty bishops in the Milevitan council; or those two hundred and seventeen bishops, whereof the famous St. Austin was one, who not only stubbornly rejected the claim, but also manifestly demonstrated the fraudulence and forgery of three popes, Zosimus, Boniface, and Celestine, about appeals to Rome: how all these shall be exempted from this censure, I know not. Did not the later of these African councils decree, that the bishop of the first see (meaning Rome) should not be called the prince of priests, or chief priest, or any such thing, but only the bishop of the first see? Did it not excommunicate every priest that should appeal to Rome? It seems to me that St. Athanasius could have no great opinion of the infallibility of pope Liberius, when, through fear, himself had forgot he had any such thing, and consented with the Arians

to the condemnation of that holy Father. St. Hierom seems not to have had any thoughts of the pope's supremacy, when he said, that "wherever there is a bishop, whether at great Rome or petty Eugubium, he is of the same merit and priesthood." Neither did either he or St. Austin seem to have had a just esteem for the church of Rome's authority, when they preferred that of the eastern church before it, in receiving the Epistle to the Hebrews into the canon of scripture. Above all, what must I think of their great saint pope Gregory the First, who called the title of *universal bishop* a new title, which none of his predecessors ever used, "a name of vanity, a profane name, wicked, and not to be uttered, yea, a blasphemous," saying, that "whosoever desired it, shewed himself to be the forerunner of Antichrist." If I must believe this great pope and saint, I know well enough what to think of most of his successors in the infallible chair; if I must not believe him, why must I believe those who succeeded him? Had not he and they one and the same authority as popes of Rome? Believe both I cannot; and disbelieving either, as all papists, no less than I, must disbelieve the one, I am no better than a heretic, and uncapable of salvation.

Further yet, I find that the African council, but now mentioned, did allege for itself the sixth canon of the first general council held at Nice, which is this; "Let the old custom be kept through Egypt, Libya, and Pentapolis, so that the bishop of Alexandria have power over all these, because the bishop of Rome hath also the like custom." By this canon these two bishops seem to be made equal in power. In the fourth general council held at Chalcedon, and ninth canon, it is ordered, "That if any bishop or clerk have a controversy with the metropolitan of that province, they have recourse to the primate of the diocese, or certainly to the see of the royal city of Constantinople, that the business may be ended there." This council seems hereby to make the bishop of Constantinople equal to the bishop of Rome; and this it did, notwithstanding great opposition made against it by pope Leo the First. So that I must involve in the same censure of condemnation some of the most famous general councils that ever were. This I am apt to think a very daring matter, and not rashly to be attempted. I have indeed been taught by our blessed Jesus,

that God will not forgive us if we do not forgive our brethren; but I do not remember where he hath taught me that God will not save us, except we believe that no man but a papist can be saved.

II. I have now considered some of the many difficulties I am to struggle with, before I can get through to the church of Rome. And truly they seem to me, whatever men of more strength and courage may think, little less than insuperable. And yet, after all this, if I may be convinced that the authority of the Roman church hath sufficient grounds of scripture and reason to support it, I must confess no difficulty in my way ought to dishearten me from breaking through it. But then again, if I must believe that there is such an uncontrollable power in the church, in some one church, in the Roman church by name, yea, in the bishop of that church; and if I must so believe this, that I must not leave in my soul any room at all for the least charitable thought of any man's salvation, who believes it not; I think it no less than needful, that I have the clearest and most undeniable evidence in the world for what I believe, lest the sentence of condemnation should recoil upon myself for my temerity and uncharitableness.

Indeed, if this church may be allowed to bear witness to its own authority, and such a testimony be sufficient, I cannot want it. The council of Trent hath more than once called her *the mother and mistress of all churches*. So infallible in her judgment and directions, so absolute in her dominion and command she must be, that her sole authority must be warrant enough, and nothing else any warrant without it, for all things that belong to Christian religion. "Whosoever," saith Becanus, in his Compendium, "in matters of faith and religion, followeth the true church of Christ, (which he there proveth to be the Roman church only,) cannot err about faith and religion, seeing the true church of Christ is infallible." And this we are told continually, as this Jesuit doth say, that "this is the shortest compendium of all controversies." This then being to support the whole fabric of popery, had need to stand on firm ground.

This ground I would now fain discover. Why then must we believe that the Roman church hath this sovereign authority in religion? I must confess myself one of those sturdy he-

retics, that cannot believe without reason. When I hear that church telling me she is infallible, and hath all power over all other churches, I cannot believe it, till I have some better reason for it than this, that she must be all that which she is pleased to say of herself; and therefore must be infallible and omnipotent too, if she say it. And I am a little troubled to say, that this is all I can get out of her for my satisfaction, lest even protestants should think I say incredible things of her, and that I have no other design but to make all the learned men of her communion seem ridiculous, in talking to us as to children, always childishly. But it is not in my power to make their arguments better than they are, nor civil in me to teach them what to say; and I am sure my temporal interest cannot at this time tempt me to oversee the strength of their reasons. The very best reasons I have yet met with, with how much artifice and sophistry soever they are dressed up, amount to no more, nor better, in my opinion, than her own honest word, that is, her own authority and infallibility, for proof of her authority and infallibility; and therefore I must either believe them both, before I can believe them, even whilst I am inquiring for a reason why I should believe them, or I must not believe them at all, nor with her consent be saved.

The missionaries tell us, they are willing to undergo any pains or difficulty to rescue us from damning error; and whilst they proceed in this method, I have cause to believe them; for I am confident, to prove their church hath this authority they contend for, is as great a difficulty as they can meet with. If they should here offer us (what is so much talked of by them) the testimony of the universal church, there is nothing more plain than that they do but mock us. For this can be nothing else but the church of Rome's testimony for her own authority. It cannot, I say, be any thing else, because the thing they are proving is, that she alone is the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church: and were it any thing else, they would never discover it to us, because they would thereby give us an unanswerable argument against what they would prove her to be: for if they will shew us any other church or churches, by the testimony whereof her authority may be proved, we are thereby enabled to prove she is not the only true church, out of which there is no salvation. What then

can this testimony be? Is it that of the first and purest ages of the church before popery was brought forth? Not so, to be sure; for popery was (they say) from the beginning, and glorieth of her antiquity above all things. Is it the testimony of all others in the world that profess Christianity? It cannot be; for all these, if not of her communion, are heretics, and in a state of damnation for denying her authority; and were it possible for them to witness that to be which they deny to be, yet is their testimony invalid, because they confess themselves fallible, and this point of faith cannot stand upon a fallible testimony. By this it is very clear to me, that the testimony of the catholic church of Christ, if it be produced for the authority of the church of Rome, can be nothing else but the church of Rome's own words; and I never doubted but she hath a good word for herself, any more than I doubt lest it should be thought a good proof of her authority.

I have heard again much talk of universal tradition among the Roman catholics; but if they allege this for their church's authority, they give us only the same thing again in other words. Universal tradition can be nothing else but the testimony of the universal church, and that must be the church of Rome; and so we are not advanced one step further than we were before. The credit we are to give unto universal tradition depends on the authority of the Roman church, which we have not yet found, but are inquiring after.

If fathers and councils be brought in to witness this authority, all the noise they make will prove but the voice of the Roman church, crying herself up for the great Diana of the world, and thundering anathema to all that will not fall down and worship her. Will she abide by the testimony of either father or council, if they speak not what she has taught them, or against what she holds? or shall they be allowed to overrule the oral and practical tradition of the present church of Rome? Are councils of any credit more than the pope's confirmation gives them? and are single fathers of more credit than they? If not, we have yet no more but her own word for her own authority.

If they bring us scripture to prove this authority, I must say, that as we reverence fathers and councils, so we adore (with Tertullian) the fulness of the scripture; neither can we desire

any better proof than its testimony. Yet when I consider how these men use the scripture, I am at a stand to think, how they can in good earnest produce it as a witness in this matter; for after they have said almost all the ill they can of it, calling it imperfect, insufficient, obscure, unsensed, they seem to ridicule both it and us, when they bring it forth, thus disabled, for a witness. Do not they tell us again and again, that both the canon and the sense of scripture depend, as to us, on the authority and interpretation of their church? And can its testimony then possibly amount to any more than that church's bare word? Do not they deny us a judgment of discretion, whereby we should discern for ourselves whether it speak for or against their church's authority? And will they yet produce it to convince us of the authority by which alone we are both to receive and understand it? It cannot be produced to convince us in our judgment, for we are not allowed any use of our judgment in the case. It must be only to convince themselves that we are heretics; and I dare say that may be done without the scripture as well as with it, whilst their church must give the sense of it.

But because they know we magnify it, they will produce it, though I cannot see to what other end than to persuade us to take heed of trusting too much to it, or thinking it worth any thing after it hath shewed us the true church. It must be believed no longer than it is authorized to speak by that authority which is to be proved by it; so that by shewing us that authority, it loseth all its own authority for ever. "For this," saith Stapleton[o], "that God hath commanded us to believe the church, we do not hang our faith on the authority of the church, as upon the proper and sole cause of this belief, but partly on manifest scriptures, by which we are remitted to the teaching of the church, partly on the creed," &c. This then is the end of producing the scripture, that we may be convinced by it, that we are no longer to learn of it, after we are once brought by it to the knowledge of the church's authority; but thenceforward are to depend wholly upon the teaching of the church, unto which it remits us. All the use then that we have of the scripture, is to be guided by it to the

[o] Stapleton. Tripl. c. 15.

church of Rome (though it cannot do so much for us neither, but as that church guides it); and having thanked it for its kindness, we are then to bid it good night.

Now seeing manifest scriptures are promised us, to guide us to the Roman church, I think it reasonable to expect, that they produce such scriptures as are more manifest to us than their church's authority, which is to be proved by them; seeing it is by their evidence I am to be convinced of that, which as yet is unevident to me. Neither ought the sense of these manifest scriptures to depend upon the interpretation or authority of that church, the authority whereof they are brought to prove, as a thing to me not yet evident; for so I shall be still but where I was before; and instead of manifest scriptures, be shuffled off with the church's bare word; I mean, with such interpretations of scripture as I have no reason to receive, but by that authority whereof I am yet, at least, in doubt.

Now, that there are indeed no such manifest scriptures, I am reasonably well assured beforehand. I have read the scripture over and over, and find not the least mention therein made of this authority of the Roman church. The pope of Rome, or his supremacy, is never once named from the beginning of the Bible to the end; nor can I meet with one syllable touching either the infallibility or jurisdiction of him, or his councils, or of any kind of subjection due to either, from all Christians. I cannot so much as find there, that ever there was any bishop of Rome, or that there should be any there afterwards, much less that all Christians are to own that bishop for their head, and Christ's vicar. And finding nothing of all this, I must needs wonder how manifest scripture should be produced to prove this supreme authority over all churches. And yet, if there be such an authority, and if it be so necessary for all Christians to believe it, and submit to it; I cannot but think that it ought to have been as manifestly declared in scripture, as any other point whatsoever. St. Peter, in whom this authority is said to have been first settled, saith not a word of it in his epistles. St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Romans, who should in all reason have been best acquainted with it, says nothing at all of it. To the civil magistrate, which the church of Rome makes to be much inferior to the church in

authority, they both teach us our duty; and strange it is, if they knew of any such thing, that they should not as plainly instruct us in our duty to the pope, or church of Rome, wherein our salvation, the main thing they were to take care for, is so deeply concerned.

But what are these manifest scriptures at length? I find our blessed Saviour saying to St. Peter, Matt. xvi. 18. *Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven*, &c. But I find not that all this, whatever it may signify, was manifestly said to the bishops of Rome. "The plain and obvious sense," saith Bellarmine[p], "of these words is, that we may understand the primacy of the whole church to be promised to St. Peter under two metaphors." And yet, by all the light that he is able to afford me, I cannot discern in these words, whatever was promised to St. Peter, the supremacy, much less the monarchy of the bishop of Rome over all churches. And it is no wonder if a protestant heretic be so blind, when such eminent persons as Origen, St. Austin, St. Hilary, Ambrose, Chrysostom, and Cyril, could no more see it than I, as the learned cardinal himself there confesseth. Nay, here is not a word to assure us that this rock must needs be a monarchy invested with a supremacy of power over the whole church, or that this monarch must needs be the bishop of Rome, or that the gates of hell shall never prevail against the Roman church; for all this, we must be beholden to that church's own word, or we shall never find it in this place.

I find again, that Christ commanded St. Peter (John xxi. 16.) *to feed his sheep and his lambs;* as indeed it is the duty of all pastors of the church to do; and both St. Peter (1 Pet. v. 2.) and St. Paul (Acts xx. 28.) tell us as much; and so much the apter am I to doubt whether the pope be so much as a good pastor of Christ's sheep or no, seeing he takes so little care to feed, and so much to fleece them. I am sure I read of no more but of *one chief Shepherd and Bishop of souls*, which St. Peter tells us is Christ himself, 1 Pet. ii. 25. The apostles were all shepherds under Him; but where is this manifest

[p] De Rom. Pont. l. 1. c. 10.

scripture to shew that St. Peter was made head shepherd, with commission to feed and rule too, not only the sheep, but the shepherds also? But especially, where is the commission given to the bishops of Rome successively for ever, to govern the whole flock of Christ with sovereign authority? Feed the whole, I am sure he neither doth nor can.

Many great and wonderful things (as Bellarmine tells us) are said of St. Peter in the holy scripture, and very deservedly; for he was a very great and eminent apostle. But the scripture never saith, that he was a great monarch, nor that he was bishop of Rome, nor that he had a throne, or but a chair there; and least of all, that this imaginary monarchy was to descend unto the next bishop of Rome, and to his successors for ever; and that St. John, who long outlived St. Peter, became thereby subject to some of those bishops, which did not well suit with the dignity of an apostle.

I read those words of St. Paul, 1 Cor. xii. 21. *The head cannot say to the feet, I have no need of you.* But that the pope is the head, and all Christian kings, as well as others, the feet, I may possibly read in some such Jesuit as Bellarmine; but I am sure I shall never read it in the scripture.

Many more such parcels of scripture as these they give us; but after the most serious perusal of them all, I profess I cannot find any thing like manifest scripture for the authority of the Roman church. And therefore it seems yet as plain to me, as that two and three make five, that the bare word of that church, without any kind of solid proof, is all that she hath to shew for her authority. She says great things of herself, and talks sometimes of scripture, but much more of fathers and councils, and universal tradition, and indeed every thing that is venerable; but when all is spelled and put together, it is but the oral and practical tradition of the present church, that is, her own very confident asseveration.

If we have a little scripture for fashion's sake, we must take it as she hath taught it to speak in her own vulgar Latin, which the council of Trent was even then pleased to make the only authentic translation, when it was confessedly very faulty, and hath been since that divers times corrected. And then we must take it in her own sense too, though we know not well where we may be sure to find it. Her private doctors she will

not allow us to trust for it, nor indeed do we find them any better agreed about it than others are, only they have for the most part either the modesty or cunning to refer all to the judgment of the mother-church, could they but tell us where to find it; for she is loath, once for all, in some public comment, or exposition of the scripture, to tell us what it is. If we may be allowed to hear the testimony of the Fathers, she must stand at their elbows, and prompt them what to say; we must have them in her own approved editions; and if they have been at school long enough in the Vatican, or some religious house, it is probable they were reasonably well instructed in her own language, before they were allowed to go abroad again. However, ere they pass the press, an expurgatory index can teach them either to speak or to be silent, as she thinks most seasonable. Councils may be heard, but only such as have his holiness's stamp upon them; and how we can understand them any better than the scripture, till he interprets for us, is hard to say. So that all returns to this still, that we have her honest word for her authority; and this is the sole foundation, that I can discover, of this prodigious faith, which we must all have, or else perish eternally.

III. And now, in the last place, seeing it is come to this, for ought I see, that I must rest upon her own word, or nothing, for the truth of her sovereign authority, and must, upon peril of my own damnation, take upon me this invidious profession, to believe all men damned but papists, that I may enjoy the blessing of my mother; I should be glad to know that she herself, as infallible as she is, could but probably assure me where this word of hers may certainly be found.

The Representer indeed (in his confident way) hath told me, "That all the members of his religion (however spread through the world) agree like one man in every article of their faith." And if we would know, for our learning, by what happy means this wonderful agreement is effected, he tells us, "It is by an equal submission to the determinations of their church;" that is, as I understand it, by taking her bare word for every thing. "No one of them," saith he, "though the most learned and wise, ever following any other rule in their faith besides this, of unanimously believing as the church of God (or Roman church) believes." And if this be so, I wonder to what purpose

their learning and wisdom can serve them, any more than their judgment and wit, which they have renounced and deposed. However, if this be true representing, I shall not, I hope, find it difficult to find out the church's word and authority, on which my faith must stand. Every member of it, though he have no more than the old collier's faith, can help me to it in any part of the world, for all agree like one man, in every article, and therefore sure in this most fundamental one. But what now shall I think after this, if it should so fall out, that hardly one in a hundred of these members know either where this church of theirs is to be found, or what those determinations of hers are, unto which they so unanimously submit? Nay, what if their church itself cannot tell them this? When she hath said all she can to inform both them and us, suppose it be still two to one that we shall be mistaken in it, whatever we take to be the Roman church, or her infallible word? This is it, that I am now, for a close, to inquire into.

It must needs seem more than a little absurd, and exceeding hard, to tie a man, under pain of damnation, to believe he knows not what, and what nobody can certainly shew him; I mean, a power in the church of Rome, which all men deny, but they of her communion; and about which, even they who are of her communion are so divided among themselves, that I do not see how they can ever agree about it. Is there no dispute in that church about this power? Have they not been even at daggersdrawing among themselves about it? Is the controversy yet decided? or can any one promise me that it ever shall? "There is a great diversity among the schoolmen," saith our Representer, "in their divinity points, and opinions of such matters as are no articles of faith, and have no relation to it, but as some circumstance or manner, which being never defined by the church, may be maintained severally, either this way or that way, without any breach of faith, or injury to their religion." I will not stay here to ask him what greater diversity he can find amongst the members of our church, than he here grants to be amongst papists; nor why our divisions, being no greater than theirs, nor more nearly related to any article of faith, should be less consistent with the unity of the church (as is commonly objected against us) than theirs are; but I ask, whether the supreme authority of the Roman church be an

article of the Roman faith or no? And again, whether all the members of that church be as one man, unanimously agreed about it, or no? He will say, it may be, about the article they are, as to the substance of it, though not as to all circumstances: but now if it appear that these circumstances of the power about which they differ, are such as the thing itself will be as good as nothing without them; or if they be not as certainly known and believed as the power itself, I think it will follow, that all their agreement about the thing is as good as nothing too, till these circumstances be also agreed upon.

Thus it is then; I must for my salvation believe that there is such a thing as a supreme power over all churches, in the church of Rome; and in this all papists, as one man, unanimously agree; but about the circumstances of this power, there is a great diversity of opinions among them; yet is this no injury to their religion. Though without a better agreement about these circumstances, no man, in my opinion, can be able to satisfy me what their religion is; for these circumstances about which they differ, are no more but such inconsiderable things as these: Whence this power is; whether it be of God or of men; of Divine, or human right only; whether it extends over all the world, or over all Christians only; to spiritual concerns only, or to temporal also; where it resides and is lodged; in the church diffusive, or all Christians, especially the pastors; or in the church representative, or general councils; or in the church virtual, or the pope of Rome. These petty circumstances they differ about, and the church itself knows not how to agree them; but what is all this to the article itself, most firmly believed by all, that is, a supreme power in the church? All their religion rests on the determinations of their church; all the force of these determinations to oblige the faith of men, depends on this supreme power; may not a man, however, well enough be assured of his religion, though no man can tell him whence this power is, over what it is, or where it is? Indeed, what other men can do, I know not; but for my own part, I must needs think it a very hard matter to believe this power, and to have any certainty of the religion founded on this power, without some better information about these circumstances of it; and therefore before I can yield to be of that religion, I must beseech that church, which will not

allow us to be saved, without an absolute submission and resignation of ourselves to her authority, to tell us, if not whence, (which is yet the most material circumstance of all the rest,) yet at least what and where it is.

There is challenged by this church, a power of overruling our faith by her infallible judgment, and a power of commanding our obedience by her sovereignty. It will therefore concern me to ask, how I may be rightly informed in both these great branches of her power, unto which my subjection is required, upon pain of damnation.

1. She claims a power of interpreting, or giving the certain sense of scripture, of judging and finally deciding all controversies of religion, of peremptorily defining and determining in all matters of faith and religious practice; so that all are bound, without any further dispute or search, to submit to all her determinations and decrees. Infallible then we must believe this church to be, and that she cannot err in her definitions of faith and manners: and yet where this infallibility is to be found, is a question she is not at this day able to resolve: in short, I find that this infallible church, which tells us that she cannot err, when she is desired to make this apparent to the world, can tell us certainly both how, and in what she can err; and in this, I doubt not, but she is infallible enough; but who they are in all her communion, or in what things it is that they cannot err, this she could never tell us certainly; and yet it is this alone that can make her infallibility (if she have it) to be of any use to us.

The Representer saith, "That the papist believes that the pastors and prelates of his church are fallible; that there is none of them (and yet the pope is one of them, and councils are made up of them) but may fall into errors, heresy, and schism, and consequently are subject to mistakes." And further he tells us, "That though some allow the pope the assistance of a Divine infallibility, without being in a general council; yet he is satisfied it is only their opinion, and not their faith, there being no obligation from the church of assenting to any such doctrine." And though he maintain the necessity and right of general councils lawfully assembled, yet is it not so plain, whether he count them infallible or no, by what he says in that chapter of councils. This we are told, "That if

any thing contrary to what Christ taught, and his apostles, should be defined and commanded to be believed, even by ten thousand councils, he believes it damnable in any one to receive it." But in the following chapter he speaks out, and says, "That by the assistance of the Holy Ghost, they are specially protected from all error, in all definitions and declarations in matters of faith." And this is true, though he grants it possible, "that the pastors and prelates there assembled, may be proud, ignorant, covetous, enormous sinners, and infamous for other vices, and at other times may prevaricate, make innovations in faith, and teach erroneous doctrines." Now a man would think, that if all the guides and pastors of the flock (not one excepted) may err, then the sheep, which are bound to follow their shepherds, may err also; and if the fallible lead the fallible, it is not impossible for both to err; and who it is that is infallible, is hard to see. And again, seeing he tells us, "that Christ committed the care of his flock to St. Peter, and that the pope or bishop of Rome is in this charge St. Peter's successor, and that God assists those who have this charge with a particular helping grace, such as has a special respect to the office and function, and that such as was given to the prophets, and to Moses, when he was made a god to Pharaoh:" I cannot see, but it must be as consequent to all this, that the pope should be infallible, as that a general council is so, especially when it is his approbation that gives force to its decrees. Moreover, it is not easy to believe that God hath made a promise of infallible assistance to any number of pastors and prelates, who are no better qualified, than, he supposes they may most of them be, with pride, ignorance, and vice, turbulence, and covetousness, and assembled, it may be, under an heretical pope, (for such, it is granted, he may be,) and as vicious too, and ignorant as any of them. However, there are two things which make it very hard to find out this infallibility, where he sends us to seek it, in a general council: for first, they must be lawfully assembled, and next, they must determine nothing contrary to what Christ and his apostles taught, otherwise it is damnable to receive their determinations. Now it will be hard for me to find out how lawfully they were assembled, and therefore as hard to believe all their decrees as infallible; and I fear I must not be allowed to examine their definitions, whe-

ther they be according to the doctrine of Christ and his apostles, or no, lest I thereby seem to follow my own private judgment or spirit, rather than the infallible judgment of the church representative. This is all then that I can learn from his discourse; I must take it for a truth, that this infallibility is lodged in a general council, and that it can determine nothing contrary to the doctrine of Christ and his apostles; and then I need not inquire whether it have done so or no; though if it have done so, it is damnable for me to receive its determinations. But I will hear what others tell me.

Bellarmine saith, "That all catholics are thus far agreed, that the pope, as he is pope, in the midst of his counsellors, or together with a general council, may err, or judge amiss in matters of faith." And if this be true, he may even so err in the whole faith, as far as I can yet see; for he may thus err in determining that there were such men as Christ and his apostles; that any of them preached, planted churches, writ books; that these are their books, or that St. Peter was at Rome, and was bishop there; left the bishops of that see his successors in all his power; that there hath been an uninterrupted succession of bishops in that church; that any unwritten traditions concerning faith and manners were left to the custody of the church; and many more such things, which were matters of fact, and on which the faith of that church depends. Again he saith, "That the pope, as a private doctor, may err, even through ignorance, in matters both of faith and manners." And thus the church, whether virtual or representative, may err. But I would fain hear wherein she cannot err, and whether all catholics are agreed as well in that.

The famous chancellor of Paris, Gerson, Almain, Alphonsus à Castro, the Parisian doctors, yea, and no less than pope Adrian the Fourth, saith the same author, have taught, "that the pope, as he is pope, may be a heretic, and teach heresy, when he defineth any thing without a general council." And truly, if as a man he may be a heretic, I see no reason why he may not be so as a pope; for I take the man and the pope to be here both one. But further, these last named will have this infallibility or judgment to be in the council, and not in the pope. And Bellarmine tells us, "that this opinion is not properly heretical," and for this good reason, (which if it

should not hold, they would lose a great part of their church,) "because they that hold it are tolerated in the church, yet it seems erroneous, and next akin to heresy." It should seem by this, that an error tolerated by the church of Rome is no heresy; but if not tolerated, it is. Indeed I know not well how ever she can err heretically at this rate, unless she will grow so unkind to herself, as not to tolerate her own errors.

The same Jesuit tells us again, that it was the opinion of Albertus Pighius, (and whether he was singular in it or no I shall not now ask,) "that the pope can by no means be a heretic, or teach heresy publicly, although himself alone define any thing without a council." And this opinion he acknowledges to be probable, yet not certain. But I think it is very certain that popes have been heretics, either as condemned by, or condemning one another for heresy.

Lastly, He saith, the most common opinion, and that for which he brings a multitude of authors, is this, "that whether the pope can be a heretic or no, yet he cannot any way define any heretical thing to be believed by the whole church." This he calls the most sure opinion, though they who are of it seem not very well agreed among themselves about it. For some of them say simply, "the pope cannot err:" others speak it with this limitation, "proceeding maturely with the advice of his council." But now, suppose he should be too hasty, and define something rashly of his own head; "Oh! that cannot be," saith Bellarmine, "for God will not suffer it." And yet I wish he could tell us, why God may not as well suffer an heretical pope to define rashly, or indeed rather deliberately, according to his own heretical judgment, as suffer him, to whom he hath committed the charge of the whole flock, to fall into heresy.

However, considering this variety of opinions in the church of Rome, concerning this infallible judge, to which all must be subject in matters of religion, I begin to think with myself, with what satisfaction of conscience I shall be able to live in that communion. I must obey the infallible judge, or else be damned: and who is this infallible judge whom I must obey? It is the church of Rome; this all can tell me with one consent; but though this were true, yet am I no wiser for it; that whole church never yet met to judge or determine of any

thing. Who is it then in this church to whose judgment I must submit? It is the pope alone, say some; and yet these some are not agreed, whether he may not define some things rashly, without due advice, at least, when he is a heretic, as some popes have been, if popes themselves may be believed; and it seems not impossible that an heretic, obstinate in error, may define something rashly and unadvisedly. It is not the pope, but a general council, say others; and why these deserve not as much credit as the former, I know not; for they are tolerated by the church, and surely the infallible church will not for shame tolerate any dangerous error. It is neither the one nor the other, saith a third party, but a pope in council, or a council confirmed by a pope; and yet whether the determinations of such a church representative be of full virtue, till they have been universally received, is made a question by a fourth party.

Where are we now, after all this, to seek our infallible judge? Suppose a council should define it as a matter of faith, that the pope himself is subject to a council; and again, that a pope, yea, a pope in council, define the contrary, that the council is subject to the pope. This is no idle supposition of an impossible or unlikely thing; for whosoever knows what was done in the councils of Constance and Basil, consisting of as many patriarchs, archbishops, and bishops, as most of the councils ever did; and again, what afterwards passed in the councils of Florence, and the Lateran, under pope Leo X. must know that such a thing, at least, once came to pass. Suppose then this which once was, and if the pope could endure to think of a free council, might be again; what should I have to ground any certain faith upon? I must still, under pain of damnation, submit my faith to the judgment of the church. It is not, neither I believe ever will or can be agreed upon, which is the judgment of the church, that of the council, or this of the pope, or the other of pope and council. The contest is between those that will admit of no judge, and therefore of no decision. Their determinations already extant, are directly contrary one to another, yet both pretended to be of faith. That both cannot be so, is plain; and it may be neither is so. And whether the one or neither be so, if I would determine for myself, I make myself the judge of the

church's definitions, even of those to which I must submit my judgment, or be damned.

The other branch of power claimed by this church is, that of giving laws to all Christians, unto which all that will be saved must yield obedience. About this I find no better agreement among them than about the former. "There is so great a dispute among the doctors," saith one of them [q], "about the fulness of ecclesiastical power, and unto what things it extends itself, that in this matter few things are secure." Yet that such a power there is, we must believe or perish, though none can certainly tell us what kind of power it is, whether purely spiritual, or temporal also. And an universal power it must be, though we cannot learn how far it reacheth, whether to all, or but some, either things or persons.

"It is held by many," saith Bellarmine, "that the pope hath by Divine right, a most full power over the whole world, in matters both ecclesiastical and civil." And for this opinion, he names Augustinus Triumphus, Alvarus, Pelagius, Panormitan, and others; with whom their angelical doctor, Thomas of Aquine, seems to consent. "In the pope," saith he, "is the top height of both powers."

Others say, that the pope, as pope, hath no temporal power at all, neither can any way command secular princes, or deprive them of their kingdoms and principalities, though otherwise they deserve to be deprived of them. For this opinion he names not so much as one of their own communion; why, I know not, unless it were because he knew it to be an opinion very unwelcome at Rome; or because he thought there were but a few inconsiderable papists that held it. And therefore he fathers it upon the heretics, whose loyalty to their princes will better bear it.

The Representer here tells us, "he knows that the deposing and king-killing power has been maintained by some canonists and divines of his church, and that it is in their opinion lawful, and annexed to the papal chair; and that some popes have endeavoured to act according to this power." Yet is he not willing that heretics of any sort should carry away the honour

[q] Almain. de Auth. Eccles. c. 3.

which Bellarmine bestowed upon them, of a loyal religion; but saith, "that there are of his communion three times the number that publicly disown all such authority; that some universities and provincial councils have condemned it; and that popish princes sit as safe on their thrones as others." Yea, and he will engage, "that all catholic nations in the world shall subscribe to the condemnation of all such popish principles and doctrines, and shall join with all good protestants for the extinguishing them, with all that profess and practise them, and utter rooting them out of his majesty's three kingdoms, and the whole universe." I must do him right, notwithstanding all this; for he hath not said, that the whole church of Rome or any general council hath condemned this doctrine; or that it is by public authority, for the offence it gives, rased out of the canon law, nor the Lateran council; nor that protestant princes can sit as safely in popish countries, as popish princes may in protestant countries. And when he tells us, that the sentence of the supreme pastor is to be obeyed, whether he be infallible or no; although I have a great opinion of the loyalty of many papists, I durst hardly engage for his, if there should chance to be such a pope again, as himself confesseth some have been.

But what saith Bellarmine? "A third sort there is that takes a middle way;" and he names not a few of them, himself being one of the number. These hold, that the pope, as pope, hath indeed no temporal power directly and immediately, but spiritually only. And such as he makes it, there needs no more; for it will serve his holiness as well, and the heretics as ill, to all intents and purposes, yea, even to the deposing of princes, as the greatest temporal power in the world. "For," saith he, "by reason of this spiritual, he hath also, at least indirectly, a temporal power, and that no less than the highest. And even as the spirit or soul hath power over the flesh, to chastise, and even to deliver it up to death, in order to the spiritual ends of the soul: so also may the pope, though not as an ordinary judge, yet as an extraordinary, in order to spiritual ends, change kingdoms, taking them from one and giving them to another, abrogate the civil laws of princes, and determine of their rights." This I am sure is more than ever St. Peter had, by virtue either of the rock, or keys, or pastoral

staff; and I am confident he never thought of half this, when he charged all men to *submit to the king as supreme*, 1 Pet. ii. 13; nor when, ver. 17, bidding us *honour all men, love the brotherhood, fear God, honour the king*, he omitted to mind us of the great duty of all, the subjection we must yield to his successors, the bishops of Rome; especially, when he might well suppose we should have been much apter to have learned it of himself, than of any of his successors.

It is time for me now, I think, to consider into what a labyrinth I must run myself, by going over to the church of Rome; and how I can behave myself when I come there. I am going into a church, out of which I am told there is no salvation; yet I cannot foresee, that this church herself can tell me surely how I may be saved in it. Of this church, I am told, I cannot be a member to any purpose, if I be not in all things subject and obedient to the supreme head of it, the pope. And subject to him I cannot be, if I actively obey not his commands; for passive obedience is now become the despised badge of an heretic. But what the pope's power to command is, I can meet nobody that can certainly inform me. It is an absolute power over all the world, say some: no, say others, but only over Christians, and in things spiritual. Well, says the third party, though it be directly and immediately only spiritual, yet it is no less for that; but in order to spirituals, it reacheth over all, both temporal persons, laws, and judgments. All this power is in me only, saith the pope. You are too hasty, sir, say some councils and the doctors of France; for the chief power is by Christ himself given to the council, and even to put down and set up popes, as they would deal with kings and emperors. Which of these now must I believe and obey?

The prince, under whose government I live, may command me one thing, and the pope, my spiritual father, may command the contrary. How must I now do to bear myself evenly betwixt two such masters? I consult my spiritual guides, and take the best advice I can get; some say one thing, and some another; and which to believe, I stand in need of another guide to direct me; nay, the church itself, knew I where to find her, (so visible is she,) could not tell me which is in the right. If I believe those who tell me the pope

has no power in temporal matters, then is my prince in all such matters to be obeyed, say the pope what he will to the contrary. If I hearken to them that tell me the pope has a fulness of power in all, both temporal and spiritual matters; I must obey my prince in nothing without the pope's leave. If I listen to them, who say the pope's power in temporal matters is indeed the highest power; yet indirectly only, and in order to spiritual ends, then am I so far to obey it, and no further. And here I am at as great a loss as ever; for who shall judge for me, whether his commands be needful for spiritual ends, or no? It is very unlikely that my prince and the pope should agree in the determination of this point; and the difference being between them two, and their commands, to whose award will they stand? I must here necessarily be left to the direction of my own, or some other private judgment, and which side soever I take, it is an even wager whether I can be saved.

I have been considering all this while for myself alone, and the satisfaction of my own conscience. I presume not to judge for, nor of others. They who have more light, and better eyes, may go on more confidently; it is all my care to go safely for myself, and as inoffensively as I can to all others. I see many wise men among Roman catholics, and I dare not say the contrary; but that they are of another religion than I, because they are wiser and better able to choose than I. If I choose as wisely as I can for myself, I cannot do any better for myself, and I doubt not of being saved whilst I do so well. And if it should prove so, that I choose the worse, he hath no reason to be angry with me, to whom I leave, and do not grudge the better.

I cannot yet think it necessary to salvation to believe that church infallible, which not only in my opinion, but in the judgment of all other Christians, (and they are two to one and more,) hath often erred, and doth very grossly err in many things; and which, if we ask her, can herself only tell us, who they be in her communion that can err, but not who they be that cannot. Nor can I think it safe to be of that church, where I may not be allowed to judge or try, whether error be taught me or no. I cannot think I am bound to judge either myself or others in a state of damnation, for not denying our

senses, or captivating our judgments to the judgment of an infallible church, which could never determine where her judgment or infallibility is certainly to be found: or for not obeying the head of that church, which hath sometimes no head, sometimes many heads, and is always uncertain which is her head, or where it stands. If I must thus believe, and thus obey, nobody can tell me what, and declare I do all this, or in the judgment of that church which must be believed infallible, be no better for turning papist; then I verily think I am much safer as I am, a poor protestant. I am sure I may as safely, as I can freely, captivate my judgment both in faith and practice, to the doctrine and laws of the blessed Jesus, whom all Christians unanimously acknowledge both the supreme and infallible Head of the universal church. I will no longer lose my labour in seeking an infallible guide, which almost every body can tell me of, but no man can certainly shew me. Instead of an ecclesiastical monarch on earth, I will content myself with that *blessed and only potentate, King of kings, and Lord of lords*, whom his Father hath made sole Head of the church, *which is his body*; who long since told us that *his kingdom is not of this world*, as, I fear, the pope's too much is.

A DISCOURSE

CONCERNING A

JUDGE OF CONTROVERSIES

IN

MATTERS OF RELIGION.

BEING AN ANSWER TO SOME PAPERS ASSERTING THE NECESSITY OF SUCH A JUDGE.

THE PREFACE.

WHEN I first undertook to answer these papers, I little thought of writing a book; but when it was writ, I was more easily persuaded to make it public; for such kind of objections as these our people are daily assaulted with, and our ministers daily troubled to answer; and therefore it will be very serviceable to both to print such a plain discourse as this, which whatever defects it may have, I am pretty confident does sufficiently expose the weakness and sophistry of such arguments.

The truth is, this ought not to be made a dispute, and the fundamental miscarriage is, that our people are not taught, or will not learn, to reject such captious questions as tend only to scepticism, and deserve not to be confuted; which, I think, I may have liberty to say, now I have confuted them; and to shew the reason I have to say so, shall be the subject of this preface.

It is thought (and certainly it is so) the most compendious way to reduce protestants to the communion of the church of Rome, to persuade them that they can have no certainty of their religion without an infallible judge, and that there is no infallibility but in the church of Rome. Now could they prove that the church of Rome is infallible, this indeed would be an irresistible reason to return to her communion; but this they say little of nowadays, this they would gladly have us take for granted, especially if they can prove that we can have no certainty without an infallible judge;

and therefore this they apply themselves to, to run down protestant certainty, and first to make men sceptics in religion, and then to settle them upon infallibility.

Now the way they take to do this is, not by shewing that the reasons on which protestants build their faith, either of Christianity in general, or of those particular doctrines which they profess, are not sufficient to found a rational certainty on; for this would engage them in particular disputes, which is the thing they as industriously avoid, as if they were afraid of it; but instead of this, they declaim in general about the nature of certainty; ask us, how we know that we are certain; if we rely upon reason, other men do not reason as we do, and yet think their reason as good as ours; if on scripture, we see how many different and contrary expositions there are of scripture; and how can we be certain then that we only are in the right, when other men are as confident, and as fully persuaded as we? Now all this is palpable sophistry, and no other direct answer can or ought to be given to it, but to let them know, that after all they can say, we find ourselves very certain, and that their attempt to prove us uncertain, without confuting the reasons of our certainty, is very fallacious.

1. As for the first, whether I am certain or not, nobody can tell but myself, for it is matter of sense, as sight and hearing is; and they may as well ask me how I know that I see and hear, as how I know that I am certain; I feel that I am so, and that is answer enough.

2. And therefore when they ask me how I know that I am certain, if this question have any sense in it, it must signify on what reason I found my certainty; for nothing can create certainty in the mind, but that reason and evidence which we have of things, as we can see with nothing but light. Now if certainty results only from the reason of things, it is ridiculous to expect any other answer to that question, How I am certain, than my giving the reasons of my faith; for there is no other reason of certainty, than those particular reasons for which I believe any thing; and this of necessity brings the controversy to particulars. There is no one reason of my certainty, because the same reason will not serve for all things; and therefore before I can give them my reason, I must know what they require a reason of, and then I will give it them. And thus we are just where we were; and if they will prove that we have no certainty, they must confute all the reasons of our faith, and dispute over all the controversies between us, a task which they are not willing to undertake; and yet there is no other way to prove the

faith of protestants uncertain, but by proving that they have no certain reasons of their faith.

Yes, you will say, it is proof enough that we cannot be certain, because we every day find so many confident men mistaken, who yet think themselves as certain as we do, and therefore we may be mistaken, notwithstanding all our assurance and confidence that we are not. Now this, indeed, would be an unanswerable argument, did we found our certainty upon the mere strength and confidence of persuasion: for men may be very confident because they are ignorant; and we readily grant, that an ignorant confidence may betray men into the grossest errors; and therefore, though every confident man thinks himself in the right, we never think another man in the right merely because we see him confident, which is a plain sign that all men distinguish between confidence and certainty. Wise men, who would not be mistaken, are very careful that their confidence do not outrun their reason, for reason is the foundation of certainty; and no man can have greater certainty than he has evidence for what he believes. Now since men may be equally confident with or without reason, the only way to try the certainty of their faith, is to examine the reasons whereon it is founded: if we can confute their reasons, we destroy their certainty: if we cannot, it is ridiculous to charge their faith with uncertainty; for that is a certain faith which is built upon certain and immovable reasons; and if the certainty of reason makes men certain, and some men's faith may be built upon certain reasons, though others are mistaken, then the confident mistakes of some men is no proof that the faith of all men is uncertain.

I am sure all mankind think thus, who think any thing, which is a good sign that it is a very natural thought. No man thinks himself the less certain, because he sees other men differ from him. The foundation of this very argument against protestant certainty owns this.

The argument is, that we can never know when we are certain, because of the multitude of differing opinions which are maintained with equal confidence on all sides. Now that this is no plain and convincing argument against certainty, is evident from the argument itself, which confesses, that notwithstanding all this diversity of opinions, all men are very confident of their own; which, I think, proves, that every man believes that he may be certain; nay, does actually think himself certain, though he knows that other men differ from him; and that, I think, proves, that they do not believe that no man can be certain, because some men are confident, and yet

mistaken. And it is equally strange to me, both that if this be such a convincing argument, (as is pretended,) no man should believe it; and that the advocates of infallibility should think to impose upon the world, with such a palpable piece of sophistry as all men despise.

There is no way to prove the faith of protestants to be uncertain, but to prove that the principles whereon we build our faith are uncertain; for if there be certain means to know the true faith, then, though some mistake, others may be in the right; and those who are in the right may know they are in the right; for the mind does as evidently discover clear and bright truth, as the eye does the light. He who feels truth will know himself certain, and no man can confute him, without confuting the reason of his faith.

This shews how absurd it is to ask us, how we know that we are certain, and at the same time to refuse to hear the reasons of our faith; or to attempt to prove that we are not, and cannot be certain, without confuting the reasons which make us certain. For certainty results from the reasons of our faith, as sight does from light; and men may as well be certain without reason, as shew how they are certain, without assigning the reasons which make them certain. And therefore the only trial of our certainty is, by examining the reasons whereon we build our certainty. And this is a plain direction to our people how to answer this captious and sophistical question. As to shew this very briefly by way of question and answer.

Quest. How do you know that you are certain, or are not deceived in those things, of which you think yourselves most certain?

Ans. What do you mean, sir? How I know that I understand? or, how I know a good reason when I hear it? Truly I know this, only as I know how I see; God has given me eyes to see with, and a faculty of reason to understand with, and I trust my eyes and my understanding, and if you can tell me any better way, I shall gladly hear it.

Quest. But do not all men say as you do, that they trust their own understanding? And are you not sensible what a fallible thing human understanding is? Do you not daily see how many men are mistaken? And how then can you be sure that you are not?

Ans. Yes, I am very sensible that many confident men are mistaken; but sure this is not the original fault of their understanding, for then all men must be mistaken; and then we must either be certain without our understanding, which is to know certainly without knowing at all; for there is no other faculty whereby we can know, but only the understanding: or else we must be contented to

know nothing; for that knowledge which has nothing of certainty does not deserve the name of knowledge.

Quest. But what is this to the purpose, what the cause of such mistakes are? For let the cause be what it will, if men are still mistaken, how do you know that you are not mistaken too?

Ans. Yes, this is very much to the purpose; for if the fault be not in the understanding, if human understandings are capable of knowing truth, then it does not follow, that because some men are mistaken, therefore all are; nay, it does not follow, that because some men are very confident in their mistakes, therefore no man can be certain that he is not mistaken. For if the understanding is capable of distinguishing between truth and error, as the eye can distinguish its objects, then it can know truth when it sees it; and this is the foundation of certainty.

Quest. But does not every man, who is in an error, think that he sees truth?

Ans. Yes, and so does a man who is in a dream think that he sees, and talks with his friends; but a man who is awake knows that he does so; and though there are a great many dreamers, you can never persuade a man who is awake that he is in a dream; and there is as much difference between the vigour and distinctness of perception in error and truth, as there is between the delusions of a dream, and the quick and strong perceptions of a man awake. And thus a man, who sees truth, does as certainly know that he sees it, as the eye does that it sees light.

Quest. And do you then resolve all certainty into your own sense and feeling, which is a kind of natural enthusiasm, and in most men nothing else but the strength of fancy and imagination?

Ans. No, by no means! I feel myself certain indeed, but my certainty does not result from bare confidence and assurance that I am in the right, which men may have who are in the wrong; but from the clear and irresistible evidence of reason, which pierces the mind, as light does the eye, and captivates the understanding into a full and immovable assent. I have such reasons for what I believe, as do abundantly satisfy me in the truth and certainty of my faith, and when I feel the evidence and conviction of reason, I feel myself certain.

Quest. But still the same question returns. How you are certain of your reason? for all men pretend to some reason or other for what they believe, and think their reason certain, or else they would not believe it.

Ans. Right! and will think themselves certain still, till you have

confuted their reasons, and convinced them that they are mistaken: for there is no other way of dealing with reasonable creatures, but to rectify their mistakes, and by strong and solid reasons to confute the vain and empty appearance of it. And if you can do this, I shall very gladly hear you, and when you please will give you the particular reasons of my faith.

Quest. What do you mean? That I should dispute all the points in controversies between us? There is a task indeed! There will be no end of wrangling at this rate; No, no! Since you are not certain, and cannot be certain in your way, I will direct you how you may be certain, without troubling yourself with disputes.

Ans. I beg your pardon, sir, I am very certain; or however, you can never convince me that I am not certain, without hearing what the reasons of my faith are, and proving them to be uncertain; for my certainty is founded upon reason, and if my reasons be certain, what should make me uncertain?

Quest. Do you not see that reason itself is uncertain? How do men differ in their reasons? What contrary expositions of scripture do they give? And what certainty then in this way?

Ans. I hope, sir, you will not say that there is no such thing as true reason, or that true reason is uncertain, or that scripture truly expounded is an uncertain rule. Now though other men reason foolishly, and interpret scripture perversely, what is that to me, if I reason right, and expound scripture truly? as I believe I do, and shall believe so, till you can prove that I do not. My certainty, I told you, is founded upon certain evidence, and you can never shake my certainty till you can shake that. It would be great and contemptible weakness in me to distrust the most plain and convincing reason, because you tell me that other men are of another mind; if you can prove that their reason is better than mine, I will yield to the best reason; but I cannot renounce my reason while I believe it true, nor suspect it, while I believe it certain.

Quest. When two men differ in their opinions, and oppose reason to reason, must not one of them be mistaken?

Ans. Yes, it may be both; but neither of them think themselves mistaken merely because they differ from each other, for that would end the dispute. If the differences in religion were an argument against the certainty of all religions, there were an end of religion; for infallibility itself could not escape, which is denied by more Christians than believe it; and therefore those who would be certain, must look well to the reasons of their faith, and those who will prove my faith to be uncertain, must prove that the reasons on

which I believe are either false or uncertain; and those who are not contented with this, quarrel with the state of human nature, and may help themselves as they can.

This, I think, is sufficient for a preface to this discourse, let but protestants maintain their ground, and not be persuaded that they have no certain foundation for their faith, till papists have confuted the particular reasons of their faith, and I dare undertake they will never see any reason to question their faith, nor find any want of an infallible judge.

But yet since some men so despise that certainty, which results from a clear and distinct knowledge of things, in comparison with infallibility, let us briefly consider what the true notion of infallibility is, and how much it excels a certainty of knowledge.

1. First then I observe, that infallibility belongs to persons, not to things. A proposition cannot be fallible or infallible, but true or false; for *fallible* signifies that which can be deceived; *infallible* that which cannot be deceived, and therefore can be applied only to intelligent beings, who are capable of either. So that to say that any proposition is infallibly true, besides the impropriety of the expression, adds nothing to truth; for that which is true is true, and can neither be more nor less true.

Secondly, Perfect infallibility is nothing else but an universal certainty of knowledge: as for instance, God only is infallible by nature; but infallibility is a negative, and there are no negatives in the Divine nature; and therefore if we would understand what God's infallibility is, we must reduce it to some positive perfection, and that can be nothing else but infinite knowledge; for this reason we say that God is infallible, because he knows all things, and he who knows all things can never mistake. So that it is knowledge which is the perfection, infallibility is only a mode of speech to signify the most perfect certainty of knowledge.

Thirdly, And therefore infallibility is not opposed to certainty of knowledge, with respect to the evidence and certainty of perception; for infallibility is nothing else but certainty, and such a certainty as results from the most perfect knowledge of the reason and nature of things, as it is in God, which is only true infallibility. There is no difference between certainty and infallibility in God, and the difference between the certainty of creatures and the infallibility of God, is this, that the one is a finite and the other an infinite knowledge; for nothing can be by nature infallible, but infinite knowledge; but a finite knowledge, which does not extend to every thing, may in some things be deceived, but as far as it reaches it

may be certain, and that is a kind of a finite infallibility. A fallible creature does not signify a being which can never be certain, but a being which has not a natural knowledge of all things, and therefore may be deceived in those things which are without the sphere of its knowledge; and therefore it is as absurd to say, that we cannot be certain of any thing, because we are not infallible, as to say, that we can know nothing, because we do not know all things.

Fourthly, And therefore fallibility or infallibility do not alter the nature of certainty. What is the certainty of God, but those clear and bright ideas of truth in the Divine mind? for he is not certain, because he is infallible; but he is infallible, because he is certain; and thus in proportion to that distance which is between God and creatures, our certainty is nothing else but a clear and distinct knowledge and perception of the reason and natures of things; and wherever this is, how fallible soever the person is in other matters, he is certain so far; and to demand any further reason of certainty than the clear and distinct knowledge of things, is to demand some other reason of certainty than knowledge; and thus we may doubt of the certainty of God, as well as of men, if we do not allow a clear and distinct knowledge to be certainty, for there is nothing beyond this.

Fifthly, And hence it follows, that as to things which are knowable by the light of nature, our certainty results from the clear and distinct perceptions of our own minds, and depends on the truth and certainty of our natural faculties. As for instance, those impressions which our senses make on us, and those perceptions they awaken in our minds, are so strong and forcible, that they create a natural certainty, and we cannot doubt whether what we see, and feel, and hear, be real or not; those natural ideas and notions we have in our minds, those first principles of reason and discourse, appear so plain and self-evident to us, that we can no more question them than our own being, and seek for no other proof of them, but their own natural evidence; as that both parts of a contradiction cannot be true; that nothing can be and not be at the same time; that no power can make that never to have been which once was; that nothing that ever was not can be without a cause. These propositions are so self-evident, that the mind assents to them without demanding any other proof but themselves, which shews that the very highest certainty of all is nothing else but an intuitive knowledge, or the mind's seeing and discerning that natural evidence which is in things; and those who will not allow a clear and distinct knowledge to be the foundation of certainty, must reject all self-

evident principles, which we can have no other proof of but themselves, at least no better, for we cannot reason *in infinitum*, and therefore must come to some first principles, which are known only by their own light and evidence.

Next to this, are those notions and ideas which are so easy and natural to our minds, that most men believe them by a kind of natural sense and instinct, without reasoning about them; and those who have no mind to believe them, yet cannot rid their minds of them; such as the being and providence of God, and the essential differences between good and evil. These are the next degree to self-evident principles, for they are natural notions, which indeed may be proved by reason, and must be so, when we meet with men who will deny them; but yet a well disposed mind which has a natural bias and inclination to believe them, sees them to be true and evident without reasoning about them. This is very plain, the less of reasoning there is required in any case the more there is of certainty: first and self-evident principles admit of no reasoning, natural notions require none; and as for all other matters, the nearer they lie to first principles or natural notions, the more certain and evident they are; nay, we have no other certainty of the deductions and conclusions of reason, but their manifest connection to some principles and notions, which may be known without reasoning; which shews, as I said before, that all natural certainty is at last resolved into an intuitive knowledge; and the certainty of reason is nothing else but the connecting those things which we do not know by nature, with those which we do.

Sixthly, Where natural knowledge and natural certainty ends, there revelation begins; but still certainty is not infallibility, but evidence, and natural evidence too: for there can be no communication between God and creatures, as to revealing his will, but by the mediation of our natural faculties; whether the object be naturally or supernaturally revealed, we have only our natural faculties to know and understand with, and therefore we can have no more than natural evidence of supernatural revelations, though this evidence is owing to supernatural causes. As for instance, an inspired prophet, though he be infallible as far as he is inspired, yet it is not his infallibility that makes him certain that he is inspired, but that certain evidence he has that this revelation comes from God; which must either be by some external and visible signs, or by some such vigorous impression upon the mind as carries its own evidence with it, which what it is no man can know but he who has it. As for those who are not inspired themselves, but must learn from

inspired men, their faith must depend upon that evidence they have for the revelation; the natural notion of God's veracity is the reason why they believe what they know is revealed; they must use their own faculties to understand what is revealed, and they must judge of the truth and certainty of a revelation from such marks and characters as are evident either to sense or reason.

So that infallibility sounds very big, but signifies very little in this dispute; for all certainty, whether in natural or revealed knowledge, must be resolved into evidence, not into infallibility. Though an inspired prophet is an infallible oracle in those things which he speaks by inspiration, yet it is not his infallibility, but that evidence he has that he is divinely inspired which makes him certain; much less can any man be infallibly certain, who is not infallible himself, how many infallible teachers soever there are in the world. For we may as well say that a man may be wise with another man's wisdom, as infallible by another man's infallibility. Every man must know and understand for himself, and infallibility is only such a perfect degree of knowledge as is not liable to any mistakes; and if no man has any knowledge, but what he has in himself, then he has no degree of knowledge but what he has in himself, and therefore can never have an infallible knowledge, unless he himself be infallible.

Suppose then we should grant that the pope or church of Rome were infallible, what advantage has a papist for certainty above a protestant? Does the infallibility of the pope make them all infallible? And if every papist be not infallible, then they can have no more certainty than fallible creatures are capable of, and so much, I hope, may be allowed to fallible protestants. The authority of a revelation in matters divinely revealed, answers to natural evidence in things knowable by the light of nature; as we cannot doubt of things which are plain and evident to our understandings, so we cannot doubt of what we know is revealed by God; but then as we must use our reason to judge of the natural evidence of things, so we must use our reason to judge of the truth, and evidence, and sense of a revelation; and it is the same mind and the same understanding which must judge both of natural and revealed knowledge; and if our understandings be not infallible, I know not how an infallible judge, or an infallible revelation, which are external things, should bestow an internal infallibility on us. And therefore, after all their brags of infallibility, papists themselves must be contented if they can be certain; for if infallibility did signify somewhat more than certainty, yet certainty is the most that a fallible creature can have;

for it is impossible for any creature to have infallibility, who is not infallible himself. And this, I hope, will make them a little more favourable hereafter to protestant certainty; for whatever can be objected against certainty in general, as distinguished from infallibility, will as effectually destroy the popish as the protestant certainty; for papists are no more infallible creatures than protestants are.

A DISCOURSE

CONCERNING

A JUDGE OF CONTROVERSIES,

&c. &c.

The Paper.

"I AM not satisfied with the foundation of the protestant religion. For if God has certainly left no visible judge of controversies, (as we assert,) and yet grant that there are things necessary to salvation to be believed, as well as things to be practised; and that the scriptures are to a demonstration not plain, even in what we dare not disown to be fundamentals, as the Trinity," &c.

Answer.

These objections against the protestant resolution of faith, strike not only at the foundations of the protestant religion, but of Christianity itself. For if the dispute were about the truth of Christian religion, by such arguments as they can prove the Christian religion to be true, we will prove the protestant religion, which is nothing else but the Christian religion, purged from the corruptions and innovations of popery. Now it would be very pleasant to hear a popish priest in a dispute with Turks or Pagans about Christianity, urge the authority of a visible judge of controversies; and if there be no way to instruct an infidel (who cannot be presumed to own the authority of any judge) what Christian religion is, and to convince him of the truth of it, but by reason and scripture, either this is a good way, or there is no certain foundation for Christianity; and let any man shew me a reason why Christians may not understand their religion the same way that heathens must be taught it. This was the way which Christ and his apostles took with Jews and heathens, and they had no other way to take with them.

The Jews had a written law, which no authority could contradict; and therefore our Saviour did not only work miracles, but appealed to the scriptures both for the authority of his person, his miracles, and his doctrine, and left every man to his own liberty to judge for himself what he must believe; which shews, that miracles themselves are no authority against a written law, for then the Jews could have had no pretence for their infidelity, and there had been no reason for Christ and his apostles to have disputed with them out of the scriptures.

The heathens had no standing revelation, and therefore the bare authority of miracles was sufficient to confirm that testimony the apostles gave of the resurrection of Christ, and the doctrine which he preached; and those who would not believe merely for the miracles' sake, were convinced by reason and argument; for thus St. Paul disputed with the philosophers at Athens, as well as with the Jews; and thus the primitive doctors dealt with the infidels in their days, as we learn from those many excellent apologies they wrote in defence of Christianity. But then those who did believe at first upon the authority of miracles, were particularly instructed in the faith of Christ out of the Law and the Prophets, which though they were originally given to the Jews, yet are the venerable records of the Christian faith, to which the apostles had recourse in expounding the Christian doctrines.

Thus Christianity was taught at first, and if this be not a solid foundation, the Christian faith has none: neither Christ nor his apostles (though they were infallible) made their own infallibility the only reason of men's faith, but referred them to the Law and the Prophets, which they expounded to the conviction of all honest and teachable minds; and if they would not believe upon these terms, they must continue infidels.

And that this way of resolving faith into the authority of a visible judge, was not known in the Christian church even in the apostles' days, (and yet methinks St. Peter's authority, if he had any such authority, should have been better known in those days than at such a distance of time,) is evident from those early heresies which sprang up in the church. For let any reasonable man tell me how it is possible there ever should

have been any heresy in the church, if all Christians had received the authority of an infallible judge, together with their Christianity: men might have renounced Christianity and the visible judge together; but had they then acknowledged a visible judge, it had been a contradiction to pretend to the name of Christians, and to oppose the doctrine of the infallible chair. Had there been a visible judge of controversies in the apostles' days known to all Christians, it had been impossible there should ever have been any heresies in the church, as those men must grant, who think it necessary there should be such a visible judge to make all men of a mind, and to prevent the rise and growth of heresies; which must suppose that the authority of a visible judge would do this, or else this argument cannot prove the necessity of a visible judge: if then the appointment of a visible judge would certainly prevent all heresies, and yet from the beginnings of Christianity there have been heresies in the church; this is a demonstration there was no visible judge in those days.

Well, but if there be no visible judge of controversies, how shall we arrive at any certainty in our religion? For the scriptures are to a demonstration not plain, even in what we dare not disown to be fundamentals, as the doctrine of the Trinity.

Now, first, suppose there are some difficult passages in scripture, which are not obvious to every common understanding; can we not therefore understand what is plain, because some things are difficult? Can any thing be plainer than the first and second commandments, not to give Divine worship to any being but the supreme God, and not to worship God by images and pictures? Can any thing be plainer than the institution of the Lord's Supper in both kinds? than St. Paul's discourse against prayers in an unknown tongue? Can any thing be plainer than what is evident to our very senses, that bread and wine is not transubstantiated into the body and blood of Christ? Men who will believe contrary to the plain words of scripture, contrary to the evidence of sense and reason, which certainly ought to be consulted in expounding scripture, who would prove that to be in scripture which is not in it, or that not to be in scripture which is there, have some reason to complain of the obscurity of scripture, for the scrip-

tures were never written to prove what they would have proved; but yet they may be very plain to men, who only inquire what the scripture teaches, without forcing such senses upon it as it does not teach: those who will prove that from scripture which is not in it, to be sure must prove it very obscurely, and then to excuse the obscurity of their expositions, charge the scriptures with obscurity. Though all things are not equally plain in scripture, yet all men may understand what is plain; and it is a strange perverseness to say nothing is plain in scripture, because some things are not plain; or that we cannot be certain of the sense of plain texts, because there are some obscure texts.

Secondly, I do affirm, that every thing that is necessary to be believed is plain in scripture; for else how should we know that we must believe it, or that it is necessary to salvation? But then by *plain*, I do not mean that it is plain to every man, and at the first sight; but it is plain to men who apply themselves to the study of the scripture, and have skill and ability to do it; and may be made plain to every man, who has the common understanding of a man, without any bias and interest, who will attend to the instructions of the learned. And this is reason enough to call it plain, if learned men by study and industry can understand it, and if the unlearned may be taught to understand it. Thus mathematical demonstrations are certainly plain, for if a demonstration be not plain, nothing is; but yet it is not every man can understand them without a teacher; but since those who do study mathematics can understand them, and any man of ordinary capacity, who will attend to the instructions of a skilful master, may understand them, we may call them plain, though they are not obvious at the first sight. For this purpose Christ appointed an order of men in his church, whose business it should be to study the scriptures themselves, and to teach others, not to impose on their faith by their mere authority, which our Saviour has expressly warned us against, to call no man *master* upon earth, and which St. Paul expressly disclaims being lords of their faith; but to open their understandings, and by easy steps to lead them into the true sense of scriptures. Thus he taught his disciples himself, as appears from all his sermons; thus the apostles taught the

Christians of their days; and this is the only teaching I know of; for to teach men to believe without understanding, is to teach them to believe they know not what nor why.

But "the doctrine of the Trinity is not plain in scripture." An assertion which strikes at the very fundamentals of religion, and justifies all the ancient heresies, which can never be confuted but out of the scriptures. For, is the doctrine of the Trinity in the scriptures, or not? If it be not there, how comes it to be an article of faith? And if it be not plain in the scriptures, how can any man tell it is there, when it is not plain that it is there? The primitive Fathers, who opposed those ancient heretics, wrote great volumes to prove the doctrine of the Trinity from the scriptures, and therefore, I presume, did think it might be proved from scripture.

This being a doctrine, which can be known only by revelation; if it is not plain in scripture, it is plain nowhere, and so not the object of our faith, unless they can shew us another revelation besides and above the scriptures. The only argument the paper urges to prove the doctrine of the Trinity not to be plain in scripture, is, that "some denied the divinity of the Son, some believed the Holy Ghost not to be a separate person, but only an attribute of God." That is, whatever some men deny, is not plain; and therefore Christianity itself is not plain, because Jews and Turks and heathens deny it. Is the form of baptism plainly contained in scripture, to *baptize in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost?* And yet many of the ancient heretics, who corrupted the doctrine of the Trinity, would not use this form, which is as good an argument that this form is not plain, as that the doctrine of the Trinity is not: and indeed if one be plain, the other must be, unless we will say that we are baptized in the name, that is, into the faith and worship of creatures.

The Paper.

"And I think the assembling those councils we receive as general, shews that their opposers were considerable."

Answer.

How considerable? For numbers, or interest, or zeal, or authority? They were inferior upon all these accounts to the

general enemies of the Christian faith, and why should not the number of infidels be as good an argument against Christianity, as the number of heretics against any one article of the Christian faith? But this is a fatal instance to the popish as well as the protestant resolution of faith, and somewhat worse; for the scriptures never complied with heretics; but the pretended visible judge did, when the pope of Rome subscribed the Arian confession. But what course did these Nicene Fathers take to confute the heresy of Arius; did they not allege the authority of the scriptures for it? Consult their writings, and see what their reasons are; and when such a venerable council thought the scriptures clear and plain in this point, is the dissent of heretics a greater argument that they are not plain, than the determination of such a council that they are? That this was the constant doctrine of the catholic church from the time of the apostles, was a good confirmation that they expounded scripture right; but had it been possible that there should have been a traditional article of faith, which the scripture said nothing of, mere unscriptural tradition could be no sufficient foundation of faith, and that for this reason, because we could not be sure what the original of such a tradition was. For the writings of the evangelists and apostles give us the most certain account what their faith was, and how ancient soever any other doctrine may be, we have no reason to think it came from the apostles, if there be nothing of it in the scriptures.

The Paper.

" And that those good Fathers did not think, after their witnessing out of scripture and tradition the belief handed down to them from father to son, that the Christians had so much as a liberty of examining after them: since they positively anathematized all those that did not receive their decrees, for which, if they had no authority, the primitive Fathers were the greatest tyrants in the world, to refuse the blessed means of salvation to those that for ought appeared were as sincere as themselves, and the generality of dissenters made scripture their rule, as well as we do. This I do not allege, that I know of any truly general council we reject, but this appears to me, that in the best of times there was thought a power left in the church without appeal to every man's reason; and the

guides of the church did not think a man safe, though he to the best of his understanding did expound scripture, if he did not follow the sense of the church."

Answer.

This paragraph is designed to prove, that there is a power in general councils to determine controversies of faith without appeal to every man's reason; and that the Fathers assembled in those first councils did believe they had such a power, that when once they had determined what the true faith was, no man might examine after them. Now whatever the Fathers of the council believed of themselves, it is plain other men did not believe it. The heretics whom they condemned did not acquiesce in the authority of the council; which yet they would certainly have done, had it been the general belief of Christians in that age, that the decrees of general councils were final and conclusive, to be believed by all men, and to be examined by none; for the most obstinate heretics could never have outfaced such a prejudice as this. After the council of Nice, the Fathers did appeal to men's private reason, if writing books in justification of the doctrine of the Trinity be such an appeal, as is evident from the writings of Athanasius, Hilary, St. Augustine, and others. Nay, it is strange there should be so many other councils convened about the Arian controversy after the decision of the Nicene Fathers, if that had put an end to all further disputes and appeals; which is a good argument that the Christians did not then think that the authority of a council was so sacred, that no man must question it, when succeeding councils examined, and many times reversed the decrees of former councils; nay, that councils, which were not general, should make bold with the decrees of general councils, which is but a degree removed from every man's private reason.

But the council anathematized all those that did not receive their decrees; and does this prove that they denied all Christians a liberty of examining after them? Might they not declare such doctrines to be damnable heresies, and reject such men out of their communion, without believing their decrees to be so infallible and sacred, that no man must examine them? Do not the protestant churches do this, without pre-

tending to such an absolute authority over men's faith? A fallible man, who is certainly assured that any doctrine is a damnable heresy, may declare it to be so; and if he have any such authority in the church, he may cast such men out of communion; and this is all that an anathema signifies; and all this may be done, and yet men dispute on and judge for themselves; and therefore to denounce an anathema, does not prove that he that does it has such an infallible and uncontrollable authority, as must silence all disputes, and captivate men's reasons and understandings to his dictates.

As for that passage, "That the guides of the church did not then think a man safe, though he to the best of his understanding did expound scripture, if he did not follow the sense of the church," it has something of truth, but a great deal of sophistry in it. It is so far true, that a man, who embraces damnable errors, is not safe, how firmly soever he be persuaded of the truth of them, and that it is very hazardous to contradict the sense, not of any council, which may be a packed conventicle of heretics, nor of any particular age of the church, which may be very ignorant or very corrupt, but of the universal church in all places and ages: but in this sense it is nothing to the present purpose: and if the meaning be, as it seems to be, that it is dangerous for a man to use his own reason and judgment in opposition to the decrees of councils, it may sometimes be so, and sometimes not, as the council is; and whatever the event be, every man must judge of that; it may prove dangerous to a man to use his reason, if he do not use it right; but yet there is no help for it, but every man must use his reason, or act like a fool.

But possibly it will be asked, what authority then do we allow to councils? and I shall very freely speak my mind of it. First, in cases that are doubtful, the judgment of so many wise and learned, and pious men, from all parts of the Christian church, is a very probable argument of the truth of their decrees; and no modest man will openly oppose what they determine, unless it appears that there was something of faction and interest at the bottom; or that the reasons whereby they were overruled were so weak or ludicrous, as to render their judgments contemptible: for if the opinion of one learned man be so considerable, much more is the deliberate

judgment of so many great and good men. Secondly, the authority of ancient councils is very considerable, as they were credible witnesses of the apostles' doctrine and practice, and the constant faith of the church in the preceding ages; which is a mighty satisfaction, to find by these venerable records, that what we now believe was the faith of the church in the best and purest ages, before it was divided by schisms and factions, or corrupted with ease, or liberty, or wanton disputes. Thirdly, general or national councils have authority to determine what doctrines shall be publicly professed and taught in their churches, and be made the articles of church communion, as it must necessarily be, if there be any authority in the church. For it is fit that the faith of the church should be one, and those who have the government of the church must have the care of the faith. But then this authority does not oblige any man to believe as the church believes, and to receive all such decrees without examination; but only if we will live in communion with such a church, we must own the faith of that church, for she will allow none to communicate with her who do not. Now if the faith and worship of such a church be pure and orthodox, the church is in the right in requiring obedience and conformity to her decrees and constitutions, and those who refuse it, must answer it both to God and men; if her faith be corrupt, she abuses her power in imposing it on Christians, and no man is bound to believe what is false, because the church defines it to be true. If you ask whose judgment ought to take place, the judgment of the church or of every private Christian? I answer, the judgment of the church of necessity must take place as to external government, to determine what shall be professed and practised in her communion, and no private Christian has any thing to do in these matters; but when the question is, what is right or wrong, true or false, in what we may obey, and in what not? here every private Christian, who will not believe without understanding, nor follow his guides blindfold, must judge for himself, and it is as much as his soul is worth to judge right: for if he reject the faith and the communion of the church, without a just and necessary cause, he is a heretic and a schismatic, liable to the censures of the church in this world, and to the vengeance of God in the next. If he reject

an erroneous and corrupt communion, he incurs the censures of the church, which in most Christian kingdoms are attended with some temporal inconveniences; and if he embrace it, he is in danger of a future judgment: for *if the blind lead the blind, they shall both fall into the ditch.* These are the proper limits of all human authority, both in church and state; below this there is no authority, and above it, it is not human authority; for a blind obedience can be due to none but God, and he himself seldom exacts it. If we will grant governors and subjects to be men, who have the use of their own reason and judgment, it is impossible to state the case of authority and subjection otherwise than thus: That the faith and judgment of governors influences and directs their government, and gives laws of faith and manners to subjects; and the private judgments of subjects direct them how far they are to believe and obey their governors, and God himself judges between them, and by his providence prevents or overrules all those disorders which may happen either in church or state in this world, and rewards or punishes both governors and subjects according to their deserts in the next. And this supersedes all further disputes about some hard cases, or the sincerity or insincerity of governors or subjects; for every man must of necessity judge for himself, and God will govern and judge us all; which there could be no pretence for, if we had not the free exercise of our reason in the government of ourselves.

The Paper.

"But I know it is urged, the church of England is guided by antiquity for the interpretation of scripture; but every one knows that there is great difficulty in that too, even for scholars, at least I am told so; for no church admits of all that is ancient, for several heresies are so; and since we say number makes nothing for truth, and that all men may err, and that there is no certain mark by visible succession to find out which are true believers, in this confusion the church of England must be very fortunate, not to retain too much, as the Arians and Macedonians, &c. say we do; or too little, as the Romanists say."

Answer.

The church of England, indeed, has regard to the doctrine of the primitive church in expounding scripture, not that she

fetches all her expositions from ancient writers, but that she takes care not to expound scripture in contradiction to the ancient faith of the church contained in the ancient creeds; and it requires no great skill in antiquity to know what this faith is, which we repeat every day in the Apostles' Creed; and this is a good argument that we expound scripture right, when the sense we give of it is what the words and reason of the text import, and agrees with the faith of the first and purest ages of the church. Had we no ancient records, we could find out the true sense of scripture in all necessary points of faith; but the traditionary doctrine of the church, where the tradition is plain and clear, and therefore easy to be known, is a great confirmation of those interpretations we give of scripture in conformity to the ancient belief, and confutes all the evasions and criticisms of heretics. For when the words of scripture may with some art be expounded to different senses, either to justify some new or ancient heresies, or the catholic faith, we need not doubt but that is the true sense which agrees with the uniform belief of the primitive church, who were the best judges what the faith of the apostles was, by whom the scriptures were written; and though there were indeed very ancient heresies, yet nothing is plainer in ecclesiastical history, than the distinction between those ancient heresies and the catholic faith, and therefore scholars cannot easily mistake them; and as for those who are unlearned, that short and ancient summary of the catholic faith contained in the Apostles' Creed, and expounded by the Nicene Fathers in their Creed, which is in every body's hands, and part of our daily or weekly service, is security enough against all fundamental mistakes.

The Christians of the church of England have a very plain and easy resolution of their faith. As for the positive articles of faith, we have the ancient creeds, which have been received in all ages of the Christian church from the times of the apostles; and which the most perverse heretics cannot deny to have been the catholic faith; and yet we do not believe these merely upon the authority of tradition, but because we find all these doctrines plainly taught in scripture; and for this the meanest Christian need not depend wholly upon the authority of his guides, but has liberty to examine their expositions, and

the reasons of them, which are so plain and convincing in the great and fundamental articles of our faith, that an honest man, who meets with a skilful guide, may satisfy himself about it, and see with his own eyes.

Now what greater assurance can we have in this case, than the harmony and consent of scripture and tradition, which confirm and justify each other? The apostles, no doubt, preached and writ the same things, and it is a good argument, that is an uncorrupt tradition which agrees with the doctrine of the scripture, and that that is a true exposition of scripture which agrees with the ancient formularies of faith, delivered down to us by an unquestionable tradition from the first ages of the church.

As for negative articles, about which is our only controversy with the church of Rome, since nothing can be an article of faith but what Christ or his apostles have taught, we think it sufficient to reject all such doctrines as are not plainly and expressly taught in scripture, and this the meanest Christian, with the help of a guide, may understand. For [as in reason it must be, when men will prove that to be in the scripture which is not] the scripture proofs which are urged by the most learned doctors of the Roman communion, for their peculiar doctrines, which we reject, are so apparently unconcluding, that it requires very little skill to confute them. And though this were reason enough of itself to reject any doctrine which arrogates the authority and necessity of an article of faith, that the scripture does not teach it, yet in most cases we can shew, and that to the conviction of the meanest understanding which is honest and unprejudiced, that such doctrines are either in express words, or by plain and necessary consequence, rejected and condemned in scripture, which is somewhat more than not to be taught there; because it is certain no church can have authority to teach what the scripture condemns.

And then as for authority, we appeal to the best authority of the Christian church, the three first ages after the apostles, who are the most credible witnesses (which is all the authority they can have) of the apostolic doctrine and practice, and can plainly prove from those venerable records, that the doctrines and practices in dispute between us and the church of Rome were

either never taught or actually condemned by those primitive Fathers. And though in other cases it is a hard thing to prove a negative, it is not so here, because the proof lies all on the positive side. For those who will teach such doctrines and practices ought to prove them, for without such a proof they are to be rejected of course; and therefore if we can confute their proofs, we need do no more; and this is a very easy task, especially with reference to the first three centuries; for since they themselves are now ashamed of the counterfeit Dionysius, their Decretal Epistles, and such like spurious writings, the wisest of them pretend to very few testimonies from the first writers, and those which they do allege are such lame ones, as need very little confutation.

These are the protestant grounds of faith, as it is professed in the church of England, and there is but one material objection against the certainty of this way. That our dissenters pretend to scripture as well as we, and so most heretics have always done; and as for antiquity, the church of Rome makes a greater noise with it than we do, and how then can a plain and unlearned man choose safely in such variety of judgments and opinions?

Now the force of this argument consists in this, that because some men mistake, no man can be in the right; or because some men may confidently believe they are in the right, when they are in the wrong, therefore no man can be sure that he is in the right; which pretence would be laughed at in all other cases excepting religion, and here I am sure it deserves to be so. There is a vast difference between confidence of persuasion and certainty of knowledge; the prejudices of education, the authority of guides, the bias of interest, and such like fallacious principles, may make men very confident, when they know little or nothing about the matter, or men may reason falsely, and think themselves very confident, as a man in a dream does; but can no man be certain he is awake because some men very confidently think themselves awake, when they are in a dream? The greatest part of the world pronounce a hasty judgment before they are well awake before they have considered the matter throughly, and weighed every circumstance of it; and a man who has but half considered a thing, may with very good reason think himself certain so far, and

yet may be grossly mistaken, because there is another half which he has not considered. Every man is sensible of this when he corrects a mistake, for he discovers something which he had not thought on before, which makes him alter his judgment about it; and therefore though some men are confident and yet mistaken, it does not hence follow that no man can be certain when he reasons right; for truth lies so easy in a man's mind, who has throughly considered things, and has such a native brightness and lustre in it, that he can no more doubt of it, than whether the sun be up when he sees its light.

But let us consider this objection particularly, with reference both to scripture and antiquity.

First, it is objected that heretics pretended the authority of scripture as well as the orthodox, and our dissenters as well as the church of England. But what then? Is the scripture of no use, because some men use it ill? Is it not possible to find out the true sense of scripture, because some men put a false sense on it? Can these heretics be confuted out of the scripture, or not? If not, why do we charge them with heresy? If they may, how are such heresies, being fathered on the scriptures, an argument against studying the scriptures, and relying on their authority? For we cannot confute heresies by the scripture, unless we can understand the scriptures; and if we may find out the true sense of scripture, notwithstanding that heretics put a wrong sense on it, then we may be as certain that we understand the scriptures aright, as we are that others do misunderstand them. But besides this: though heretics pretend to expound scripture, yet they contradict the faith of the primitive church, and therefore their case differs vastly from the case of the church of England, whose faith is founded both on scripture and apostolic tradition, as I observed before. And as for our dissenters, our dispute with them is not about articles of faith, but the external modes and circumstances of worship, or the government and discipline of the church; and the question between us is, whether we must use no external circumstances of worship but what are prescribed in scripture; or whether the constant practice of the church from the days of the apostles be not the best comment on scripture, as to the external government of it? And this, I

think, is so baffled a cause, that the Romanists are hard put to it when they use that argument.

Secondly, As for antiquity, the church of Rome makes great boasts of it, but they are very vain ones; and who can help men's pretending to antiquity, when it is apparently against them? No man, indeed, can be a competent judge of this, but those who are skilled in antiquity, and have examined their pretences; but there are some considerations which lie obvious to every man, and may serve to direct the unlearned what judgment to make in this matter.

1. For had true antiquity been on their side, what need had they of spurious and counterfeit authors to make some appearance of antiquity with? This has been the great artifice of the church of Rome, though they begin now to be ashamed of it, since the learned reformers have discovered the cheat. Who pleases may see some account of this in an English book, entitled, Roman Forgeries; and this is reason enough to suspect their pretences to antiquity; for no man takes sanctuary in falsehood, who has truth on his side.

2. Another evidence of this is their corrupting ancient authors, and because they can find nothing in them to their purpose, to insert something which is; but the plainest and honestest confession of this matter is their Index Expurgatorius, which corrects the Fathers, and orders the leaving out of such passages as make against them; now when they are forced to leave out and put into the Fathers, it is very suspicious that they are convinced the Fathers are not on their side.

3. Where they make the loudest cry of antiquity, the scripture is either against them, or says nothing for them; and though we allow the ancient practice of the church in matters of discipline and government, to be a good pattern for us to follow in such particulars as are not expressed in scripture, if they comply with the general rules and directions of scripture; yet we do not think antiquity itself to be a sufficient justification of any doctrines of faith, or new acts of worship, which either the scripture condemns, or does not teach; and this is a manifest difference between the pretences of the church of England and the church of Rome to antiquity. The church

of England justifies her doctrines and practices, both from scripture and antiquity, which is as sure a foundation as we can possibly have; the church of Rome alleges antiquity (such as it is) to prove such doctrines and practices, as the scripture either condemns or knows nothing of. Now we think the scriptures have the greatest antiquity, and are a perfect rule of faith and manners, and that no other antiquity can control the authority of the scriptures. As for instance: suppose the church of Rome could prove the worship of images, praying to saints and angels, prayers in an unknown tongue, and communion in one kind, &c., to have been anciently practised in the church, (though this they are never able to prove,) yet what is this to the purpose, when the scripture expressly condemns the worship of images, and giving religious worship to any other being but to God only, and by their own confession says nothing of the worship of saints; and that St. Paul disputes designedly against prayers in an unknown tongue; and that our Saviour instituted his supper in both kinds, and commanded them to drink of the consecrated cup, as well as to eat the bread. Though I have a great reverence for antiquity, yet if St. Paul, in his days, pronounced an anathema against angels themselves, who should preach any other gospel, we may safely renounce the authority of any church that shall contradict the express commands and institutions of Christ.

To conclude this argument: were antiquity our only guide and rule in matters of faith and worship, I readily grant it would be a very uncertain rule, and such as neither the learned nor the unlearned could build their faith on; for there have been great variety of opinions and practices in other ages of the church, especially since the fourth century, (from which the church of Rome principally date their antiquity,) as well as in our own; which shews what an uncertain foundation the church of Rome has for her faith, as for all those doctrines and practices wherein she differs from us, which have no foundation in scripture, and at best a very uncertain one in very late antiquity: but this does not concern us, who prefer scripture antiquity before all other, and own no antiquity in contradiction to the scripture, which is the rule and foundation of our

faith; and by this we know, that we neither retain too much nor too little, because we teach neither more nor less than what the scripture teaches.

The Paper.

"But it is replied, the church of England gives leave even to women to examine the truth of what they teach; but certainly this is a compliment, they being incapable of examination, neither indeed are statesmen, lawyers, the busy, nor the stupidly ignorant. For if we will be judges ourselves of these matters, what life or capacity is sufficient? For in justice, if I examine, I ought to hear all the several pretenders to the interpretation of scripture, who make it their rule of faith, so to examine those texts that make against us, as well as those for us, and the several expositors. For in affairs of much less importance, people are thought foolish and partial, let one party tell his story to a seeming demonstration, not to preserve another ear for the other side, before he determines, if he must judge at all."

Answer.

The lightness of this expression of complimenting, does not savour of a serious mind in matters of such vast importance. Did our Saviour then compliment his hearers, when he commanded them to search the scriptures; for he had women, and very busy people who heard his sermons? The poor and the ignorant, and the despised people, publicans and sinners, received the gospel, which does not so much require great leisure and capacity for study, as an honest teachable mind; and I confess, I think it a great reproach to the gospel of our Saviour to make it so much an art and a mystery, that none but great scholars can understand it. Scholars, indeed, have made an art, and a mere disputing art of it; and heretics, who have corrupted the gospel, have endeavoured by perverse comments to make plain places obscure; and the church of Rome has more countenanced this pretence than any other church in the world, to frighten people from reading that book, which is the most dangerous book that ever was written against popery. And after all their talk of the obscurity of scripture, their denying people the free use of it, is a plain confession that they think it too plain against themselves, so plain that every ordinary Christian would be able to see it.

But if so very few people are able to judge of the disputes in religion, what course shall women and other persons, whom the paper makes such incompetent judges, take? Suppose they have been educated in the communion of the church of England, and are now assaulted by popish priests to go over to the church of Rome, must they make this change with reason, or without it? Must they judge for themselves, or forsake one church and choose another without judgment? Or can women, or busy, or ignorant people, more easily find out the true church and the infallible judge, than they can read in scripture, that they must worship none but God; that they must not worship images and pictures; that they must pray to God in a known tongue, and celebrate the supper of our Lord by drinking of the cup, as well as by eating the bread? Whoever ventures to forsake the communion of a church, wherein he was baptized and educated, I am sure ought to be able to judge whether he be or no; and those who confess they are not able to judge, ought to keep where they are; for it is safer to continue in a church without judgment, than to forsake it without reason and judgment. In the first case, the providence of God in our birth and education will make some apology for our involuntary mistakes; but if we wantonly leave one church and go to another, without being able to judge of either, the act is wholly our own choice, and if we leave a better for a worse, we must take what follows; and therefore this is the most improper argument in the world, to be used by one who is wavering between two churches; for if he must not use his own private judgment, I cannot guess how he should either choose or refuse. Those who challenge a liberty of judging for themselves, which is the undoubted right of all reasonable creatures, may change as they see reason, and at their own peril if they choose wrong; but those who disclaim all right and capacity of judging must continue as they are, and take their chance, for they may as well choose their faith as their guide, whom they will in all things believe.

But still the force of the objection is not answered, that he who will judge must judge upon the whole matter, and therefore must know and be able to answer whatever is said to the contrary; which the greatest number of men, as well as

women, are not able to do; but if this be true, the greatest number of men as well as women, must never believe there is a God, or that Christ came from God to declare his will to the world; for there are very few of them that ever heard, or are able to answer the tenth part of the arguments of atheists and infidels against the being of a God, and the Christian religion; and yet it is ridiculous to talk of authority, or a judge of controversies in these matters; for we must first believe there is a God, and that Christ came from God, before we can believe that they have appointed a judge of controversies. So that we must either say that common people, who have not time nor abilities to understand and answer all the objections which are made against the existence of a God, can have no good reason to believe there is a God; or we must grant, that men may have sufficient reason to believe some things, without being able to answer all possible objections which are made against them.

The plain account of this matter is this: that there is such a degree of evidence, arguments so plain and clear and convincing, that the mind may safely acquiesce in them, without examining or answering all possible objections which may be started. Every man finds this in himself, there are many things which he can never be made to doubt of, though it may be he has but one plain argument to prove them: though the philosopher disputed very subtilly against the possibility of motion, he could persuade none of his scholars that motion was impossible, because they saw themselves and every thing else move every day; which was a sufficient confutation of all the arguments that can be brought against motion. If I have any one unanswerable argument to prove that a thing is, or that it is not, this is a sufficient foundation for my faith, though I cannot answer all objections against it: for there are no objections of any force against a plain and positive proof but such as weaken the proof itself, and they, indeed, must be considered, but all other collateral difficulties may be rejected; for if I can prove that a thing is, no other difficulties about the nature, notion, or operations of such a being can prove that it is not. As for instance; we have a great many positive proofs that there is a God, especially from the visible effects of his power and wisdom in making the world; now if this be a

good argument, and nothing can be said against it, which can move a considering man, then we may firmly believe there is a God, though there may be a great many difficulties objected against the notion of a God, what he is, and how he made the world, &c., which do not prove that there is no God, but that we do not perfectly comprehend him. And yet this is generally the case, that where there is one plain and evident proof for or against any thing, there is no plain and evident proof on the other side; for then indeed we should be in a hard case, could there be plain positive proofs for both sides of the question. It will be of use to shew this more particularly, how men of very ordinary abilities may arrive to a very great certainty in religion, without being able to dispute the point, or to answer all possible objections; and the best way to explain this to the meanest understanding, is to give some particular instances of it.

It is a great dispute between us and the church of Rome, whether the sacramental bread and wine be transubstantiated into the natural flesh and blood of Christ, which, I think, a plain man, who will believe his senses, may determine without disputing; for he has the best evidence that he possibly can have for any thing, that the consecrated bread and wine is still bread and wine, not flesh and blood, for all his senses tell him so; and he who will suffer himself to be reasoned out of his senses, deserves to be deceived; and very absurdly complains of want of evidence and certainty, when he rejects the most certain evidence that God can give him. In matters of sense, the testimony of our senses is certainly the best evidence, and every man who has his eyes in his head can see whether it be bread and wine or not; and therefore this alone is sufficient to create certainty in defiance of all objections to the contrary.

Thus the second commandment, which forbids the worship of all images without any restriction or qualification, is a plain and express proof against image worship; for whatever apologies may be made for the worship of images, here is an express law against it, in such plain terms, as require great art and sophistry to evade them, but no art to understand them. Now there being a positive law against the worship of images, and no law either in the Old or New Testament to

give the least allowance to any kind of image worship, any man, who will believe according to evidence, must condemn image worship, whatever other unscriptural arguments or authorities may be alleged for it: and I know no need there is of any dispute in the case, if men will be determined by a Divine law.

Thus if there be a supreme infallible head of the church, he must be appointed by Christ, and that in such plain words, that every body may know who he is, and what his authority is; but Christ has done no such thing, and therefore there is none; and this alone is evidence enough to satisfy the meanest man in this matter without disputing. For if Christ hath appointed no supreme infallible judge, I am sure all the arguments in the world cannot make one: this is so plain and evident, that a man who will be convinced by reason cannot resist it; for though no pretence of usefulness or necessity can prove that there is such a judge, yet that Christ has appointed no such judge, evidently proves that there is none; for he cannot be, unless he is evidently appointed by Christ; and yet he is not evidently appointed, unless it be in such plain words as admit of no reasonable dispute. So that this whole controversy about the supreme head of the church, and an infallible judge, issues in this one point, whether Christ hath appointed such a head and judge? And there is but one way to prove it, viz. by shewing where and when Christ has done this; and this the meanest man, without disputing, may judge of; for if no such thing plainly appear, the want of evidence for it is all the evidence we need to have against it.

And thus it is in most of the disputes between us and the church of Rome, especially where the people are most concerned, they are reduced to this one plain question, whether any such thing was instituted by Christ? Because without such an institution they can have no virtue in them; and whether they be instituted or not, the most unlearned man, who can read the Bible, at least with the help of a guide, may satisfy himself. As for instance, whether the sacrament of the Lord's Supper be a propitiatory sacrifice for the living and the dead? whether the laity are not as much bound to drink of the sacramental cup as to eat of the bread? whether it be lawful to pray to saints departed, and to make them our

advocates and intercessors with God? whether we must pray to God in a language which we do or do not understand, &c.? I say nothing can justify these things but an institution; and when no such institution appears, it is a vain thing to attempt any other way to prove the lawfulness or usefulness of them; especially, if besides the want of such a positive institution, we have plain evidence against them, and such as every man may understand. When the scripture tells us, that *Christ has by one offering perfected for ever them that are sanctified*, Heb. ix. 25, 26, and x. 14; this is a direct proof against the sacrifice of the mass, wherein he is offered ten thousand times every day. When Christ is the priest as well as the sacrifice, and can be offered by none but himself, how comes he to be offered by a mass-priest, unless he, as well as the bread and wine, be transubstantiated into Christ? It is certain there can be no such thing as the popish sacrifice of the mass, unless the bread and wine be transubstantiated into the body and blood of Christ, and we are as certain as our senses can make us that there is no transubstantiation.

As for the half-communion, it is confessed that Christ did institute his last supper in both kinds, and commanded them all to drink of the cup: and this may satisfy any man, who does not believe that the church of Rome has authority to repeal the institutions of Christ, and to forbid what he commanded.

And when St. Paul assures us, that *there is but one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus*, one would think this evidence enough against the mediation of saints and angels, when they cannot shew one word for it. For as for their distinction between mediators of redemption and pure intercession, they cannot shew it in scripture, where our Redeemer is our only advocate: and when Christ himself enforces and ratifies that command of the law, *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve*; this is a plain argument against the invocation of saints, since they have nothing for it. And when there is no authority in scripture for praying in an unknown tongue, one would think that the absurdity of the practice, and the authority of St. Paul, who expressly condemns it, were evidence enough against it.

So that though men may be at the needless expense of a great deal of learning in these controversies, yet in truth there is no learning required to understand them, the meanest man may judge for himself; for the controversy turns upon so plain a point, and there is so plain evidence in the case, that an honest man may have abundant evidence and satisfaction, though he do not understand one word of all the learning which is lost in such disputes.

The Paper.

"In short, I think there is but evidence or authority to move us to believe."

Answer.

This is certainly true, if it be rightly understood; that is, if by evidence is meant the evidence of sense and reason, and by authority, the authority of scripture, which is the authority of God, who spake by Moses and the prophets in the Old Testament, and by Christ and his apostles in the New, and the authority of the primitive church, as credible witnesses of the apostolic doctrine and practice; in this sense we grant that our faith must be founded both upon evidence and authority, and this is the true protestant resolution of faith; and then the only fault of this proposition is, that evidence and authority are opposed to each other, whereas they must always go together in a true rational faith. But if by evidence be meant all the arguments whereby we can prove the truth of any thing, whether from sense, or reason, or scripture, or the testimony of antiquity; and by authority be meant the authority of a visible judge of controversies, as it is understood in this paper, then at best this is a very precarious proposition, without the least shadow of truth, that either evidence or authority must move us to believe; that is, that our faith must be resolved either into evidence, or the authority of a visible judge. For how is this proved, that when there wants evidence for our faith, we must believe upon the authority of a visible judge? It seems to me a more natural consequence, that where there wants evidence, we must not believe at all. If it had been first proved, that God had appointed a visible judge to direct those who cannot judge for themselves, there had been some pretence for saying, that we must believe either

upon evidence, or upon the authority of a judge; but without proving this first, I would desire any man to prove to me, that I am bound to believe what I have no evidence for, or which is all one, no such evidence as I can understand; and if I be not bound to believe without evidence, how can the want of evidence prove that there must be a visible judge, into whose authority I must resolve my faith?

The Paper.

"Evidence to the generality of people is impossible."

Answer.

But I have already proved that this is not impossible, but the meanest man, with the help of a learned and faithful guide, may understand the scriptures in all things necessary for a Christian to know. But suppose at present, that the generality of people cannot do this, yet can learned men do it. And one would think, if there be any evidence, at least learned men may understand it; for that which is not evident, neither to the learned nor to the unlearned, I fear is no evidence at all; unless there be such a kind of evidence, as is evident to nobody; and yet the church of Rome has brought things to a fine pass, if she must be forced to deny that we have any evidence for our religion.

Now if there be any evidence for our religion, and learned men may understand it, then at least learned men may judge for themselves, and not depend upon the authority of any other judge; and thus there is no need, nay, there can be no use of a visible judge for the learned part of the world; for to say that learned men have evidence to ground their faith on, and yet must not believe according to evidence, but authority, is to say, that men have eyes, but must not use them to see their own way, but must follow a guide blindfold. And yet if learned men be allowed to see and judge for themselves, a judge of controversies will signify very little; for it is learned men who start difficulties and manage disputes, and are the authors and patrons of heresies; and if these learned men, who may and must judge for themselves, differ from each other, and from the judge of controversies, what remedy is there? Nay, if learned men must judge for themselves according to the evidence they have of things, and not be overruled

by authority without evidence, there can be no visible judge of controversies; for an authority, which may be contradicted, (as it may be, if learned men must judge for themselves,) can be no authority either with the learned or unlearned; for the unlearned will have no great reverence for that authority which the learned may contradict. And therefore, whoever will have a judge of controversies, must not lay the necessity of having such a judge merely upon the ignorance of the multitude, for this does not prove that learned men must have such a judge; nay, it proves that learned men need no such judge, if ignorance only make him necessary; and if there be not a judge for learned men, there can be no judge of controversies; for there are more disputes among the learned than the ignorant. The ignorance of the people is only made a pretence to deceive ignorant people, but is no good reason for a visible judge; for there can be no visible judge, unless he judge for the learned as well as the unlearned; and if learned men must not judge for themselves, it is then a ridiculous thing to talk of any other evidence than the authority of the judge; for what does evidence signify, if no man must use it? Nay, upon these principles it is a ridiculous thing to distinguish between learned and unlearned men in matters of religion. To what purpose is it to read and study the scriptures, fathers, and councils, when they must not exercise their own reason or judgment about them? What privilege have the learned above the unlearned, when they must know and believe no more than their judge will let them?

The Paper.

"And we are discouraged from the quiet way of submission to the clergy's authority, by your telling us, that no assembly of men have power on earth to bind the conscience."

Answer.

How comes submission to the clergy's authority in here? For is every priest the judge into whose authority we must resolve our faith? This indeed is the last resolution of faith in the church of Rome, for the priest is the immediate guide of every man's faith and conscience; and after all the talk of a visible judge, the people know nothing more what he teaches,

than what their priest tells them, who it may be himself knows little of the matter. And I cannot see what greater security this gives the people of the Roman communion than what our people have, who have generally as wise and learned, and honest guides as they, to say nothing more.

But who ever said, "that no assembly of men have power on earth to bind the conscience?" We do acknowledge that the church has power to make laws to bind the conscience; for whatever laws she makes for the edification and good government of Christian people, which contradict no law of God, and are agreeable to the general rules of the gospel, do bind the conscience. Nay, in matters of faith, the authority of the church is so sacred, that all Christians are bound in conscience quietly to submit to her decisions, where there is not plain evidence against them: but we say, indeed, that no man, nor assembly of men, have such authority as to oblige us to believe all their dictates and decrees without examination, much less contrary to the evidence of sense, reason, and scripture, and the judgment and practice of the first ages of the church, and therefore we do not require that men should believe merely upon the authority of their teachers, without understanding why they do so. But this, I hope, is no discouragement to any men to submit to the instructions of their guides, and to learn from them what they are to believe, and why; and this will make them wiser men, and more understanding Christians, than to rely wholly on their authority.

The Paper.

"For authority, that of the church of Rome is infinitely greater, who, it is to be feared, at least has an appearance of succession and visibility, and who pretends that God has left in that church such means, so happy and so easy to attain to the certainty of the truth, that our very divines wish, in this confusion of things, God had so ordered it for certainty and union."

Answer.

This is a strange paragraph, that only a fear of an appearance of succession and visibility, and her own pretence that God has made her the visible judge of controversies, should render the authority of the church of Rome infinitely greater

than of any other church, which are very little things to give so great an authority.

But we will readily grant, that the church of Rome has been a visible church in a constant succession of bishops and pastors, from the apostles' days till now; what then? How does this give her a greater authority than other churches, which have as visible a succession as she? The Greek church has been a visible church, and preserved her succession from the apostles till now; the church of England is as visible, and has as good a succession as the church of Rome; how then does succession and visibility give the church of Rome a greater authority than the Greek church, or the church of England?

It is a mighty weak foundation for the authority of a judge of controversies, (which is the matter in question,) that such a church has a visible succession from the apostles. A judge of controversies, who shall oblige all men to believe his determinations, must be infallible; unless we will say, that God has obliged us, without examination, to believe a judge who may err, which cannot be, unless we can suppose that God may oblige us to believe a lie, for thus it may happen, if we are always obliged to believe a judge who may sometimes err, as all fallible creatures may: which shews what a poor shift it is which some late writers have used, (and which this paper, which speaks not one word of infallibility, seems to imitate,) to set aside the dispute about the infallibility of the church, which they can make nothing of, and to insist only on the authority of the church to determine controversies, as a visible judge; for that only obliges men either to renounce the communion of such a church, or to submit to her determinations, not at all adventures to believe as the church believes, as I shewed before; and therefore this does not concern the dispute about the resolution of faith.

Now if the judge of controversies must be infallible, how does a visible succession from the apostles prove any church to be infallible? This is no natural effect, as the Romanists themselves grant; for then the successors in all the apostolical chairs must be infallible, since all the apostles were as infallible as St. Peter; whereas they will allow this only to the chair of St. Peter, as a peculiar prerogative granted to him by Christ;

so that it is not succession or visibility which proves the church of Rome to be the infallible judge of controversies, which is the thing this paper insists on; but they must return to the good old arguments of *Tu es Petrus*, and, *Pasce oves*, which I perceive the author of this paper was ashamed of; and therefore I shall not take a needless trouble to confute them.

If indeed they could prove a visible succession of doctrine and worship, as well as bishops, from the apostles, that they believed and practised neither more nor less through all the several ages of the church to this day, than what St. Peter taught them, though this would not make them the judge of controversies, yet they would be good witnesses of the apostolical faith, and there would be great reason to inquire what their faith and worship is: but their mere succession to the apostles does not prove that they have neither diminished nor added to the faith of the apostles; for there is no natural necessity that those who succeed should always be of the mind of their predecessors; and we have plain evidence, that the church of Rome has in several ages made new and strange additions to the Christian faith; and their succession of bishops, without a succession of faith and worship, is little worth.

And yet it is much stranger still, that the church of Rome's pretence to the authority of a judge should be made a reason to believe that she has this authority. What advantage has confidence above modesty over weak minds! The church of England might pretend this with as much reason as the church of Rome, but she disowning infallibility loses all claim to it; and the church of Rome pretending to infallibility, it seems, gains a right to it by possession and usurpation.

But the argument, such as it is, seems to be this, that the divines of the church of England wish in this confusion of things, that there were a judge of controversies, and therefore by their own confession a judge is very useful and necessary, and therefore there is such a judge, and no other church pretending to that authority but the church of Rome, therefore she alone is that judge: which is such a chain of consequences, as hang together by magic, for they have no natural connexion. If we did think a judge of controversies useful, does it hence follow that God has appointed such a judge, when there is no appearance of any such thing? or if God

had appointed such a judge, does the church of Rome's pretending to be that judge, when she can shew no commission for it, prove that she is so?

But the truth is, whatever divines they be (if there be any such) who wish for such a judge to unite the whole Christian church in faith and worship, they take very wrong measures of things. And because the true understanding of this is the most effectual way to end this controversy, I shall discourse particularly of it.

1. First then I observe, that an infallible judge of controversies, whom we are bound in all cases to believe, is inconsistent with the constitution of human nature. Man is a reasonable creature, and it is natural to a reasonable creature to understand and judge for himself; and therefore to submit to any man's judgment, how infallible soever he be presumed to be, without understanding and judging for ourselves, is an unnatural imposition upon mankind; this destroys human nature, and transforms a man, who is a knowing and intelligent creature, into a senseless, though infallible machine, which moves by external direction, not from an inward principle of knowledge and life. To know, and to follow a guide without any knowledge or judgment of our own, are two very different things, the first is the understanding of a man, the other a sort of knowledge without understanding. For though I had an entire system of true propositions, which I must exercise no act of reason and judgment about, but only receive them as the dictates of an infallible judge; this is not human knowledge, this is no perfection of human understanding; no man is a jot the wiser or more knowing for all this, no more than he would be who could repeat all the propositions in Euclid, and believe them to be all true upon the authority of his master, but knows not how to demonstrate any one of them, which is to understand nothing about them. Now I can never believe that God will destroy human nature, by suspending all the acts of reason and judgment, to make men infallible; which is a certain way indeed to prevent error, to let men know and judge of nothing, that they may not mistake; but for my part, I value knowledge so much, that I had rather venture some mistakes, than forfeit my understanding. If my faith must be resolved wholly into the

authority of an infallible judge, though I may think I understand some things, yet I must not believe for that reason, for then I must believe nothing but what I do understand, and see a reason for, which makes every man his own judge; but I must believe my judge with or without understanding, without the exercise of my own reason and judgment, which may make us good catholics, but does also unman us.

But you will say, are we not bound to believe infallible teachers, whom we know to be infallible? And has not God in several ages given such teachers to the world, Moses and the prophets, Christ and his apostles? And must we not resign up our understandings to them? And does this unman us? Why then may we not resign up our understandings to an infallible judge now, as we ought to have done had we lived in the days of Christ and his apostles, and any other infallible teachers? Now for answer to this, consider,

Secondly, That no infallible teacher can wholly supersede the exercise of our own reason and judgment. For though the immediate authority of God must and ought in all cases to overrule us, and is the best and most rational account of our faith; for nothing is more reasonable than to believe God, who is eternal truth; yet when any man pretends to teach by God's authority, we must in the first place judge of his authority, and not believe every one who pretends to come from God, which resolves the very reason of our faith into our own private judgment; and therefore by this rule we must at least use our own judgment in the choice of our judge, which in our present case will infer the use of our own reason and judgment as to all the material disputes in religion, and make such a judge needless when we have found him; of which more presently.

Nay, secondly, we must judge of the doctrine of such a teacher by sense and reason, which are the natural principles of knowledge; for let a man pretend never so much to a Divine authority, if he preach any thing contrary to the sense and reason of mankind, we are not to believe him, no not though he should work miracles. For we must believe nothing comes from God which is contrary to sense and reason, which are the natural notices God has given us of things; and as God cannot contradict himself, so we can never be surer that any man speaks from

God, than we are of what sense and reason teaches; and if the church of Rome would but suffer us to judge thus far, we should have an infallible demonstration against her infallibility. However, this shews that the most infallible teacher cannot destroy our natural liberty of judging, for we must judge of his doctrine by sense and reason, and see that it contradict neither, which are the only natural principles of knowledge we have; which is therefore to exercise all the reason and judgment which God has given us.

And, thirdly, though we must receive all Divine and supernatural truths upon the authority of the revealer, yet we must use our own reason and judgment to understand the revelation; which cannot possibly be otherwise. For whoever it be that speaks to us, whether God by an immediate voice from heaven, or a prophet inspired by God, we have no way to understand what is said, but our own natural faculties, and therefore must judge of the sense of what is said, just as we do at other times when any man speaks to us. And if we were not present to hear the prophet speak, but have his revelations delivered to us in writing, we must take the same course to understand such a Divine book, as we do any other human writing; if there be any difficulty in it, we must seek for somebody to help us to understand it, but still we must understand for ourselves, for nobody else can understand for us, and if we must understand, we must judge for ourselves too. This is all that we demand or desire, a liberty to understand and judge what God would have us believe and do; and this the most infallible teacher cannot deprive us of, no more than he can oblige us to see and hear with other men's eyes and ears, when God has given us eyes and ears of our own.

And fourthly, where there is a standing revelation, we must then judge of the doctrine of all succeeding prophets, how infallible soever they be, by its conformity to the preceding revelation. We must never suppose that God can contradict himself, and therefore though he may improve a former revelation by new and more perfect discoveries, yet he can never contradict it; and hence it follows, that no true prophet can contradict a true revelation; but though a power of miracles may give authority to a new prophet to expound a former revelation, and to improve it, yet we must be well satisfied

that the doctrine of this new prophet be agreeable to the old revelation, which makes us judges of the sense both of the old and the new revelation: for it is impossible we can understand their agreement, unless we can judge of the sense of both.

This was the case of Christ and his apostles, when they appeared in the world. The law of Moses, and the writings of the prophets, were the standing revelation which God had given to the Jewish nation, whereby they were to try all prophets: *To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them*, Isaiah viii. 20; and therefore, though Christ wrought more and greater miracles than ever Moses did, this alone had not been a sufficient reason to believe him, had not his person answered the types and predictions of the law, and his doctrine been, not the destruction, but the improvement and perfection of the Mosaical dispensation. To this trial he submitted himself and his doctrine, appeals to Moses and the prophets, requires them to *search the scriptures, for they are they which testify of me*, John v. 39; and after his resurrection from the dead, which one would have thought had been sufficient of itself to have confirmed his Divine authority, yet he proves from scripture that *thus Christ ought to suffer, and to enter into his glory, and beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them* (the two disciples going to Emmaus) *the things concerning himself*, Luke xxiv. 26, 27. And this course the apostles took in their sermons. St. Peter did not only testify to the Jews, as an eyewitness, that *Christ was risen from the dead*, but proves that David himself had prophesied of this, Acts ii. 22, &c. Thus St. Paul disputed with the Jews at Rome, to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, *persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening*, Acts xxviii. 23. Thus his Epistle to the Romans is one entire dispute about the obligation of the law, and justification by faith in Christ, from the types and predictions of the law itself. So that Christ and his apostles were certainly as infallible teachers as ever were in the world, yet they did not bear men down merely by their infallible authority, but appealed to the scriptures, and to every man's own judgment of them, and God had ordered it so, that it could not be other-

wise; for he had given them a standing revelation, whereby they were to judge of all new prophets, whatever they were; but if they must have relied on the bare word of such prophets, whom they were to try by this revelation, for the sense and interpretation of it, this had been the same thing as to take their own word without any trial.

Now if Christ himself never pretended to any such authority, that all men should believe him upon his own word, without examining his doctrine by the scriptures, or exercising their own reason and judgment; can we think that he should give any such authority to St. Peter? Nay, when it is evident that St. Peter never had any such authority, and never could exercise it, how can St. Peter's successors have that in his right, which he never had nor could have himself? For though he was an infallible teacher, yet every man had a liberty to examine what he taught, and to judge of it by its conformity to the law and the prophets.

But you will say, could not Christ appoint an infallible judge of controversies in his church, to decide all disputes, and to prevent heresies and schisms? That Christ has not done this, I shall take for granted, till I see some better proofs of it than I have yet met with; and I have some reason to think such a judge could not be appointed, whom we should be obliged to rely on with an implicit faith, without examination, or any use of our own reason and judgment; and that is, because it was impracticable to appoint a judge, upon whose bare authority we are bound to believe the truth of Christianity itself: Christ and his apostles did not assume to themselves to be such judges in their days, for there lay an appeal from them to Moses and the prophets, as you have already heard, and so there does to this day; and if I must not take any man's word for the truth of the Christian religion, I must not take his word neither for the truth of any doctrine in Christianity. If I may to this day examine the gospel by the law and the prophets, as the Jews did in our Saviour's days, then I must judge for myself too, as they did, and not believe any pretence of infallibility against my own sense and reason. I cannot compare the doctrine of the law and the gospel, unless I understand them both, and I can understand and judge only with my own understanding; and if I must have

done thus, though I had lived in our Saviour's days, surely I must do so now, whatever infallible teachers there may be in the world; which, I think, is a demonstration that there neither is nor can be any such infallible judge, whom I am bound to believe purely upon his own authority.

But it may be objected, that this proves too much, and undermines even the protestant resolution of faith into the authority of Christ and his apostles, and the writings of the New Testament, as an infallible rule of Christian faith and manners. For it seems, though we pretend to own their infallibility, yet we must examine their doctrine by the law, and not believe them to be infallible, till we have sat in judgment on their doctrine, and approved it as agreeable to a more infallible rule; and thus we believe their infallibility because we like their doctrine; not believe their doctrine because they are infallible.

Now there is so much truth in this objection, that I cannot believe that Christ and his apostles are teachers come from God, unless I be satisfied that they teach nothing contrary to any former revelation which God has made of his will; for God cannot contradict himself, and therefore whoever contradicts what God has before taught can be no true prophet. And therefore, though miracles alone were sufficient to give authority to Moses, who was the first prophet by whom God made a public revelation of his will, yet miracles alone were not sufficient to give authority to any succeeding prophets, but their doctrine also must be examined by its conformity to the law; for though miracles gave them authority to make new revelations, yet not to contradict the old. So that to examine the doctrine of Christ and his apostles by the law, so far as to see that they do not contradict it, is no more than to examine whether they be true prophets or not, as all men ought to do before they believe any pretenders to prophecy; but when it appears that they do not contradict the law, then that power of working miracles, wherewith they are endowed, obliges us to believe them in every thing else upon their own authority. And thus we own Christ and his apostles to be infallible teachers, (and consequently receive the writings of the New Testament as an infallible rule of Christian faith,) because they were men endowed with supernatural powers, and did not in

their preaching contradict any former revelation of God's will. And this is all that we do or need affirm, to destroy the pretences of an infallible judge; for if I must still judge for myself whether the doctrine of the gospel do not contradict the law, then I must judge for myself both of the sense of the law and the gospel, or else I cannot judge whether they agree or disagree; and therefore there can be no infallible judge, to whom I must submit my own reason and judgment in this inquiry, for that were to own their infallibility, before I know whether they are infallible or not.

Though I must believe whatever an infallible judge teaches, yet I must not believe him till I know him to be infallible; and, I should think, no pretender to infallibility should exempt himself from such a trial, as all prophets after Moses, even Christ and his apostles themselves, submitted to; that is, to have their doctrine tried by a standing revelation. Now suppose the pope, or church of Rome, to set up for this infallible judicature, before I can own their infallibility, I must at least examine whether what they teach do not contradict the law and the prophets, for thus I may and must examine the gospel itself, and if in any one thing they plainly and directly contradict the law, I have nothing more to do with their infallibility; for no man can be infallible, who mistakes in any one thing.

The church of Rome then teaches, that we may give religious worship to saints and angels and images. Having the law of Moses in my hand, I turn to it, and according to the best of my understanding, I find this worship expressly forbid in the first and second commandments. No, say they, this is your mistake; we are the infallible judges, and you must not trust your own understanding, but take the sense of the church in it. By your favour, gentlemen, say I, you are a little too hasty with your infallibility; when I am satisfied you are infallible, I will trust you; but I am now inquiring whether you are infallible or not, and therefore as yet we are upon even ground, and I must trust my own judgment till I find one more infallible. Now, I say, you contradict the first and second commandments, and therefore are not infallible, and you would prove that you do not contradict these commandments from your pretended infallibility, which is the

thing yet in question. Christ and his apostles permitted men to judge for themselves, whether they contradicted the law and the prophets, and therefore suffered them to judge of the sense of the law too; and so must you do also, unless you pretend an exemption from all trial and examination, which Christ and his apostles never pretended to. This shews, that even to this day no pretence of infallibility can exempt men from having their doctrine tried by the law and the prophets; for the gospel itself may still be thus tried, and therefore there can be no such infallible judge as has any authority to oblige us to believe any sense they put upon the law, contrary to our own sense and reason; for then such a judge as this could not be tried by the law: for if he alone has authority to interpret the law, nobody can try him but himself. And this plain instance I have given of their contradicting the first and second commandments utterly overthrows their infallibility, till they can prove, not by their pretended infallibility, but by plain reason and argument, that they do not contradict them. And we desire no more than to set aside their plea of infallibility, and we will reason the case with them when they please.

And besides this, by a parity of reason this argument reaches much further: for if the doctrine of Christ and his apostles must be tried by the law and the prophets, because no man can have any authority against a standing revelation; then by the same reason, whoever should now set up for an infallible guide, his doctrines must be examined by the writings of the evangelists and apostles, which is now an infallible rule to us. And if the doctrine of Christ and his apostles might be examined by the law and the prophets, for the very same reason the doctrine of all succeeding bishops must be tried by the writings of the evangelists and apostles; for they are as much a standing revelation to the Christian church, as the law and the prophets were to the Jews. Nay, indeed, there is more reason now to examine the doctrine of all teachers by the writings of the New Testament, than there was under the Jewish dispensation to examine them by the Old; because the New Testament is the last and most perfect revelation of God's will, and we must expect and receive no more; for St. Paul pronounces an anathema against angels themselves,

should they preach any other gospel, Gal. i. 8, 9, whereas the law itself gave expectations of a more excellent prophet than Moses, and of a more perfect revelation; and therefore as they were to receive no prophet who contradicted the law of Moses, so we must receive none who preach any thing else than what Christ and his apostles have taught. Now if the New Testament be all that, and more than that to us, which the Old Testament was to the Jews, then we must have the same liberty of judging under the New Testament which the Jews had under the old; for there can be no more danger in our judging of the sense of the gospel, and examining the doctrines of all men by it, than there was in allowing this liberty to the Jews; we have the same natural right to it which the Jews had; a right not owing to a positive institution, but to the reason and necessity of the thing.

But to set aside this dispute about the possibility of such an infallible judge of controversies, this very consideration proves that Christ never intended it; viz. That he has given us the gospel in writing, as a standing rule of faith and manners, and has appointed an order of men to study the scripture themselves, and to instruct others in the true sense and interpretation of it.

1. Because he has given us the gospel in writing, which is now to us a standing rule of faith and worship, as the law and the prophets was to the Jews. Now the use of a written law is for every body to understand it, and direct their faith and manners by it. This was the use the Jews were required to make of the Old Testament, and certainly the New Testament was writ for the same end, or else I know not why it was writ. If then we must learn from the scriptures what we are to believe and practise, this inevitably proves that our Saviour's intention was, that we should judge for ourselves; for no man can learn any thing from a writing unless he be allowed to understand it, and judge of the sense and meaning of it: now is not this a plain proof that Christ never intended such a judge of controversies, whom we must believe with an implicit faith? If I must receive my faith upon the authority of a judge, then there is no need of a rule which I must and can make no use of; if I must follow my rule, there is no room left for a judge, for I must judge for myself: to resolve my

faith into the authority of a rule and of a judge, are as inconsistent as judging and not judging, and therefore Christ could not appoint both ways, because they contradict each other; one requires the exercise of my own reason and judgment, and the other forbids it; and therefore since Christ has given us a written rule, we may reasonably conclude he has appointed no judge. For though a law, and a judge to execute that law, are very consistent in civil government, where the sentence of a judge does not oblige men's faith, but only authoritatively determines a difference, yet they are two very contrary, and therefore inconsistent resolutions of faith.

Secondly, as Christ has given us a rule, so he has appointed an order of men to study this rule themselves, and to instruct other Christians in the meaning of it, which is an argument he intended we should understand it. For why should we be taught the scripture, but that we may understand it; and to what end should we understand it, but to make it our rule? To teach and instruct, and to determine as a judge, are two very different things; the first reserves to us a liberty of judging, the second determines us to believe the dictates of our judge. Now what need of both these? If Christ hath appointed a judge, whom we must in all things believe, what need of teachers to instruct men in the knowledge of the scriptures? If the scriptures have no sense but what the judge gives them, what an impertinent trouble is it to study the scriptures! Who can interpret them but this infallible judge? And how then can there be so many teachers, if there be but one judge? Or if the scriptures may be understood, and may be taught, what use is there of a judge, unless it be to unteach what he has not a mind to? And then he may make all other teachers useless when he pleases. Nay, if the greatest apostles were no more than teachers, where is the judge? And yet this is the only commission Christ gave to all the apostles, and to Peter, among the rest, to teach those things which he had commanded them. The charge Christ gives to Peter is, *to feed his sheep and his lambs*, which is the same St. Paul lays on the elders of Ephesus, *Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood*, Acts xx. 28, that is, to instruct and teach

them; which is the reason St. Paul assigns for those different orders of men in the church. *He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:* Ephes. iv. 11, 12, 13. Here is no judge of controversies mentioned among all these, though he had been worth them all; and, indeed, had made all the other useless, if there had been any such office. But that which I observe is, that the work of an apostle was to instruct men in the faith, to teach them knowledge and understanding, what they are to believe, and why; which is very inconsistent with the office of a judge. For he who instructs men helps them to understand and judge for themselves; but a judge only imposes upon the faith and understanding of men without any liberty of judging. If we must not understand our religion, nor use our understanding in judging between truth and error, there can be no use for teachers, and therefore that Christ has appointed men to instruct his church, is a proof that he intended they should believe with their understandings; and if all the apostles, even St. Peter himself, had no other commission but to teach, then their authority could not extend further than their teaching; that is, they could not oblige men to believe more than they could make them understand the reason of.

Well, but if Christ have not appointed a judge of controversies, what certainty can we have of our religion? And what care has Christ taken of the unity of the church? These are two points which must be considered, and if we can give a fair account of them without a judge of controversies, there will be so little need of such a judge, that there will be no great reason to contend about him.

First, as for certainty; why cannot we be certain of our religion as well as of other matters, without an infallible judge? Does any man want an infallible judge to make him certain of the sense of a plain law, or any other intelligible writing? to understand the difference between true and false reasoning? to know what kind of evidence he may

rely on as to matters of fact, which were done in a remote country, or before he was born? Now if we can be certain of any thing without an infallible judge, then certainty does not depend upon infallibility, because we can be certain without it: certainty of knowledge depends upon the certainty of evidence. What we have certain evidence for, we may be certain of; and what we have not certain evidence for, we can never be certain of. To depend upon authority, though it be supposed infallible, is but one sort of evidence, and one kind of certainty, viz. the certainty of authority; and therefore if there be other kinds of evidence and certainty for our religion, besides the authority of an infallible judge, then we may be certain still, though there were no infallible judge: for where there are more means of certainty than one, the taking away one does not destroy all certainty. Now I would fain see that man, who will venture to say that we have no possible way to be certain of the truth of Christianity, or what Christ and his apostles taught, but only the testimony of an infallible judge; for then there is no way left to make men Christians, unless they will own an infallible judge before they believe Christianity, which will argue great good-nature in them.

Well! but suppose there were other possible ways to attain a certainty in religion, yet there is none so easy, none so certain as an infallible judge, which delivers us from tedious inquiries and doubtful disputes, and makes all men orthodox, whether they will or no: now for this very reason I reject an infallible judge, because it is very plain Christ never intended such a degree of evidence as this. Faith is a Christian grace and virtue, and therefore must be an act of the will, as well as of the understanding, which supposes that the evidence is not irresistible; for it is no virtue to believe that the sun shines when we see it. Such evidence as forces an assent is inconsistent with the nature of faith, considered as a virtue, which is a free and voluntary assent, upon such evidence as is sufficient to satisfy an honest man, but not to compel an obstinate infidel or heretic to believe. Of this nature is that evidence we have for the truth of Christianity. Miracles alone, as I observed before, did not prove Jesus to be the Messias or Christ, for then all men, who saw his miracles, must have believed him, as they did Moses; but besides this, they were to inquire whether

his person answered the characters the prophets had given of the Messias, and whether his doctrine were reconcilable with their law; and here the passions and prejudices, and lusts and interests of men might interpose and corrupt and bias their judgments; and whether they would believe, or would not believe, did very much depend upon the temper and disposition of their minds. Hence our Saviour attributes the infidelity of the scribes and Pharisees to their pride and covetousness, and such like evil causes, and requires an honest and teachable mind to prepare and dispose men to receive the gospel. Such he calls his sheep; *Ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.* John x. 26, 27. Now if this be all the evidence he has afforded the world of his own being the Messias, which is the very foundation of the Christian religion, the superstructure cannot be more firm and certain than the foundation is, and therefore the same kind of evidence which Christ thought sufficient to prove himself to be the Messias, must be sufficient also for all the ends of religion. Christ has no disciples but sincere honest men, and therefore has given us such a degree of evidence and certainty as may be a trial of our honesty. It is of no concernment whether bad men be infidels or heretics; and then if there be sufficient evidence and certainty to satisfy honest men, it is enough, and there is abundant evidence for this purpose without an infallible judge, and therefore there can be no need of him.

And besides this, our Saviour has promised the assistance of his Spirit, not only to work faith in all well disposed minds, but to enlighten their understandings, and to guide them in the diligent use of those means he has prescribed to find out truth; which though it does not make them absolutely infallible, which there is no need of to carry men to heaven, yet it preserves them from all great and fatal mistakes. Now I would desire any man to tell me, what need there had been of the internal illuminations of the Spirit to direct us in our inquiries after truth, if Christ had provided such an external infallible means as a judge of controversies.

And though honest men are not infallible, yet they have this security as to their speculative mistakes, which have no ill influence upon their lives; that the mercies of God do as well

extend to the infirmities of our understanding as of our wills. For if an involuntary ignorance will be some excuse even to bad men, to lessen their punishment, much more may we presume it will excuse good men.

To demand such a degree of evidence and certainty as God has not thought fit to give us, does great mischief to religion; for this makes some men atheists, and others infidels. The infidels think, that seeing there is not evidence enough for the Christian religion to force an assent, therefore they are not bound to believe it; the church of Rome owns this, that there is not sufficient certainty without an infallible judge: and hence they argue, that there must be an infallible judge, and that the pope, or church of Rome, is that judge. Now let the infidel and the Romanist dispute it out, which of these two is the best consequence; that since we cannot be certain of our religion, whether we should wholly reject it, or set up a judge of controversies; and in my opinion the infidel seems to have the better of it; for it is a natural and immediate consequence, not to believe what we are not certain of; but I can see no connexion in the world between the want of certainty and the necessity of an infallible judge; something to be sure must come between to unite them together, and the least we can think of is this; that it is necessary we should be certain in matters of religion, and that there is no way to make us certain, but an infallible judge; and therefore, since there is no certainty in religion without such a judge, we must grant that there is one. But now if this be granted, that there wants evidence to make Christianity certain, how do they prove that it is necessary we should be certain of it? which signifies, that it is necessary we should be certain of that which is not certain? And methinks it wants a little proof too that a judge of controversies is the only possible way to make men certain. I would advise all papists not to press this argument of the uncertainty of religion too far, lest when they come to consider it throughly it make them infidels.

But if men will be but reasonable, what greater certainty can they desire than we have, the revelation of the will of God, contained in a plain and intelligible writing, which all honest and diligent inquirers, at least with the help of a guide, may understand in all things necessary to salvation; the

promise of the Divine Spirit to enlighten our minds to understand the scriptures, and to persuade us of the reason and certainty of our faith, and the mercies of God to pardon involuntary mistakes.

Secondly, the next pretence for an infallible judge is unity. For we see, by sad experience, that while every man judges for himself, the Christian church is divided into sects and parties, who first differ in their judgment of things, and then separate from each other's communion; and thus it necessarily must and will be, till all submit to one sovereign authority, and unite in one visible head. And therefore since it is evident that Christ intended that all his disciples should live in unity with each other, which he so strictly enjoins, and so passionately recommends, we must conclude that he has appointed some effectual means to end all controversies, and to unite them in one communion, which can be no other than an infallible and governing head. Now in answer to this I consider,

1. That a supreme visible head, as suppose the pope of Rome, is not necessary and essential to the unity of the church; for if all Christian churches lived in communion with each other, they would be one church, though they were all equal, without owning the supremacy of one over the rest. And therefore that Christ instituted but one church, and requires all the several parts of it to live in communion with each other, does not prove the necessity of one visible head, because they may be one without such a head, and it is easy to prove that this is all the unity Christ intended; but of this in the answer to the following papers.

2. Though Christ has made unity necessary with the necessity of duty, it does not hence follow that he has appointed infallible and necessary means of unity. I suppose all men will grant that Christ has made holiness as necessary as unity, and yet he has appointed no necessary and infallible means to keep men from sin; but we see the state of the church suffers as much by the wickedness, as by the divisions of her members; unity is a necessary duty, and so is holiness, but the practice of both is the object of our own choice and liberty; and if the commands and exhortations of the gospel, and the hopes and fears of another world, with the assistances of the Divine grace, will not make men do their duty, I know of nothing

else that can; and I do not see how Christ is more concerned for the unity than for the holiness of his church.

3. For, thirdly, I think it a great mistake to attribute all diversities of opinions to want of evidence, and all divisions to diversities of opinions; for it is plain that the lusts and interests of men have a great hand in both, or else both heresies and schisms are more innocent things than I took them to be. All the world cannot preserve men, who have any interest to serve by it, from being heretics; for interest will make men teach heresies without believing them, or believe them without reason; and interest and faction will divide the church, where the faith is the same, of which the Donatists of old are a sad example. And there is a present and sensible example of this, which the Romanists must own; and yet if they own it, it utterly destroys all their pretences to infallibility and supremacy, as such certain and infallible remedies for heresy and schism. For they must say, as they do, that Christ has vested St. Peter and his successors, the popes of Rome, with the supremacy of the church; here then is their infallible cure of schism: how then come all those schisms that are in the church? for there are a good number of them, notwithstanding the pope's supremacy, and some more for that reason. Has not Christ appointed an head of unity? Yes; but other bishops and churches would not submit to him. How? Not to Christ's vicar? How comes this to pass? Why, they dispute his authority. And has not Christ plainly given him this authority? Yes; but they wont see it. But is this inculpable ignorance, or pride and faction? If the first, then they must grant there wants certain evidence for this infallible head, and this they must not say; if the second, then the vices of men will make the institution of a supreme head as ineffectual to prevent schisms as the commands of our Saviour are; and it argues a good degree of assurance in the church of Rome to pretend the necessity of an infallible head and judge of controversies, to prevent heresies and schisms, when, though they say that Christ has appointed such a head and judge, yet the experience of the world for sixteen hundred years tells us that there are never the fewer heresies nor schisms for it; by which it appears that this is not an infallible remedy against them. Well! But it would be so, if all men would submit to

the authority of this infallible judge. Very right! And so any other way would do in which all men would agree, for then I guess they would be all of a mind; but this gives no advantage to an infallible judge above any other means of union, and therefore the necessity of unity does not prove the necessity of an infallible judge. For if the Romanists be in the right, that Christ did appoint such a judge, and such a judge be such an infallible means of unity, we should have had no dispute about it at this day; and therefore they must be out in one, either Christ has appointed no such judge, or this cannot prevent schisms in the church.

4. Fourthly, there is an easy and effectual way of curing church divisions without a judge of controversies, nay, without making all men of a mind in every thing, which must never be expected in this world; and that is, not to make the necessary terms of communion straiter and narrower than Christ has made them; nothing but what is plainly revealed in scripture, and is essential to Christian faith and worship. For such matters most Christians agree in, and though they may have some private opinions of their own, this ought not to divide communions, while they do not impose them upon the faith of others, nor introduce any new and strange worship into the Christian church.

As for example: the church of England believes and practises whatever was thought necessary in the apostles' days, and for some ages after; and there is little or no dispute about these matters between us and the church of Rome, so that we could to this day, without a judge of controversies, maintain communion with the church of Rome upon the same terms that the apostolic churches maintained communion with each other, for we both agree in all things which are necessary and essential to church communion. So that the schism between us and the church of Rome is not for want of a judge of controversies, for without owning such a judge we agree in all that is necessary, in all that Christ and his apostles required to make us members of the Christian church. But this will not satisfy the church of Rome, which will receive no other churches into her communion without owning her sovereign and supreme authority, nor without believing many doctrines manifestly absurd in themselves, and never taught in the best

and purest ages of the church; nor without joining in such a worship which they themselves dare not say is necessary, (for they do not pretend that for their praying to saints, and worshipping images, and prayers in an unknown tongue,) and which we think is sinful. If these things were removed, we could gladly communicate with them upon true catholic principles. There is no need of a judge, but only to determine those controversies which she herself has made in contradiction to the primitive faith of Christians: and therefore I cannot but commend her policy, that she will allow nobody to be judge of these disputes but herself. Would all men submit to the church of Rome, it would certainly restore peace and unity to the church, but to the great prejudice of truth, and hazard of men's souls, and we must not purchase a mere external unity at this rate. Those men overvalue unity who part with truth for it; for certainly the unity of the church is not more considerable than the purity of its faith and worship.

The Paper.

"These reasons make me think a visible judge absolutely necessary."

Answer.

What I have already discoursed, I hope, may occasion some new and different thoughts of this matter; but since certainty is the great and prevailing argument, let us turn the tables, and see what certainty a Roman catholic has. His faith is resolved into the authority of a visible and infallible judge. This, I confess, bids very fair; for he that follows an infallible guide cannot err; but whoever considers this matter carefully, will find all this talk of infallibility dwindle into nothing. For,

First, suppose there be an infallible judge; before we can with certainty and assurance rely on him, we must certainly know who he is; for it is the same thing to have no infallible judge, and not to know where to find him. And this is a difficulty which those persons little consider who please themselves so much with the fancy of infallibility. For,

1. Papists themselves are not agreed about this matter. Some will have the pope to be infallible, as Peter's successor, and in his right. Others, the church assembled in a general

council; others, neither pope nor council distinctly and separately considered, but a council confirmed by the pope; others, none of all this, but tradition is infallible. Infallibility they all agree to, but know not where this infallibility is seated. Now what shall a doubting protestant do, who has a mind to be as infallible as any of them, did he know where to find this infallibility? May he not as easily choose his own religion, and what church he will live in communion with, as which of these infallible judges to follow? Whichsoever of these he rejects, he has a considerable party of the church of Rome on his side; the only difference is, that he is so far satisfied with their reasons against each other, that he rejects them all; and he has good reason for it; for if God had intended to appoint a judge to end all disputes, certainly he would have done this so manifestly, that there should have been no dispute who this judge is; for methinks a doubtful and disputable judge is not a very proper person to end all disputes.

2. Nay, according to the doctrine of the Roman divines, it is not possible to prove either that there is such a judge, or who this judge is. For if there be such a judge, he must be appointed by Christ, and then we must look for his commission in the gospel; and yet the church of Rome will not allow us to know what the gospel is, or what is the sense and interpretation of it, but from the infallible judge. And thus it is impossible to find out either the judge or the scriptures, because we have no place to begin at. If we begin with the judge, we are a little too hasty, because we have not yet found him; and if we begin with the scriptures, that is as bad, because we cannot understand them before we have found the judge; so that we must take one of them for granted without any proof, and by that find out the other; and that is neither better nor worse than to take them both for granted; which is an admirable foundation for infallibility, at all adventures to choose an infallible judge, and then to believe him at all adventures!

So that though men, who have always been brought up in the belief of an infallible judge, may in time grow very confident of it, and take it for a first principle, which needs no proof; yet I wonder how any protestant, who has been taught otherwise, and if he acts wisely and like an honest man cannot

believe it till it is proved to him, can ever entertain such a thought; for let his adversary be never so subtle, if he resolves to believe nothing but what he sees proved, he may maintain his ground against him. As to represent this briefly in a dialogue between a papist and a protestant.

Papist. I pity your condition, sir, to see you live at such uncertainties for your religion, and obstinately refuse to consult that living oracle and infallible judge whom God hath placed in his church, to decide all controversies in faith and worship.

Protest. Sir, I thank you for your charity; and though I do not find myself so uncertain as I perceive you think I am, yet I should be glad of such an infallible guide as you talk of, if I knew where to find him.

Papist. He is to be found in the church of Rome; for that is the church which is the pillar and ground of truth; there is St. Peter's chair, whom Christ made the supreme governor of his church, whom he commanded to feed his lambs and his sheep; that rock on whom Christ promised to build his church, and that the gates of hell should not prevail against it; and therefore in communion with this church, and in obedience to the supreme pastor of it, you cannot err.

Protest. But pray, how shall I be sure of this?

Papist. Do you ask that now, when I have referred you to such plain texts of scripture for the proof of it?

Protest. Will you allow me then to interpret these texts according to my own private judgment? And why then may I not use my judgment in other matters? For I think all the articles of my creed are as plain in scripture, as that the pope or church of Rome is the supreme infallible judge; and indeed if I must stand to my own judgment in this matter, I can find no such thing in these texts you have alleged.

Papist. Your own judgment! No, by no means, this causes all the heresies in the world, that men will presume to judge for themselves.

Protest. What course must I take then?

Papist. You must stand to the judgment of the church, which cannot err; and whatever heretics say, she will tell you that these texts prove the church's infallibility.

Protest. Hold, sir, what is it we are to prove?

Papist. That the church is infallible.

Protest. And this I must prove from scripture.

Papist. Yes.

Protest. And must not rely on my own judgment neither for the sense of scripture, but on the interpretation of the church.

Papist. Right! This is the true catholic way.

Protest. That is, I must take the church's word that she is infallible.

Papist. No, you must believe the scripture, which says so.

Protest. But I must believe the scripture, not because I understand this to be the sense of it, but because the church so expounds it.

Papist. Right! for heretics expound it otherwise.

Protest. And what is this then but to take the church's word for her own infallibility? What difference is there between taking the church's word at the first or second rebound? To believe it, because she says it herself; or to believe it, because she makes the scripture say it? And therefore if this be all you have to say, I must even keep where I am, and rather content myself without an infallible judge, than please myself with a mere imagination of infallibility, without any foundation to rely on.

Thirdly, And therefore the most learned advocates of the church of Rome are forced to grant that we have no infallible assurance of infallibility; for we cannot be infallibly certain which the true church is. The only way they pretend to find out the true church, is by marks and notes of a church, which they say, indeed, have a moral certainty, though they are not infallible: for, according to their principles, they must not allow of any infallibility without the sentence and definition of an infallible judge, for then protestants may set up for infallibility without a judge of controversies; and therefore, since there can be no infallible judge to determine who is the judge of controversies, they must content themselves in this matter with moral certainty; and this brings them to an even level with poor fallible protestants. They deal very hardly with us, if they will not allow that we may have at least as much certainty of the authority of scripture, and the true sense and interpretation of it, as they can have of the notes of the true church, which must be owned for the infallible judge; and if

they be modest, and understand the weakness of their own cause, they ought to be very thankful to us if we will allow them as much; and may not we then be as infallible as they? For indeed it is impossible that any moral certainty should grow up into infallibility.

As for instance, no man can be more certain of the decisions of an infallible judge, than he is of his infallibility; and therefore if he have not an infallible certainty of the infallibility of the judge, he cannot have an infallible certainty that he defines infallibly: and thus the whole faith of a papist, after all their brags of infallibility, is resolved into moral certainty, just as the faith of a protestant is, only not with so much reason. Let us take any one article of our faith, wherein papists and protestants agree, and see how much greater assurance papists have of it than protestants; as suppose that Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God. A protestant believes this, because he has all the evidence that we can have for any thing of that nature; that the scriptures of the New Testament were writ by inspired men, and that the words of scripture, in their most plain and obvious acceptation, signify this; and therefore that this is the doctrine of Christ and his apostles, who were infallible teachers; so that the last resolution of our faith is into the infallibility of Christ and his apostles, which we have all the evidence of which sense and reason can give us. On the other hand, a papist believes that Christ is the eternal Son of God, because the church, which is infallible, teaches so; and he finds out the true church by some notes and marks of a church, which he thinks morally certain; and when he has found the true church, concludes her to be infallible without more ado. Now if the infallibility of Christ and his apostles be as good a reason of faith as the infallibility of the church or pope of Rome, and if we have as good evidence that the gospel was writ by inspired men, and that such words are contained in the gospel, as prove Christ to be the Son of God, as they have of their marks and notes whereby they find out the true church, then we have to the full as much certainty and infallibility as they have. They have but a moral evidence at best of the infallibility of their church, and therefore are but morally certain that their church teaches right; and therefore if we have as much certainty as they have, (and God forbid we

should have no more,) our faith is built upon as sure a foundation as theirs, without making a noise with infallibility, which at last dwindles into some arbitrary notes and marks of a church.

And yet fourthly, not to trouble ourselves at present with all the notes and marks which cardinal Bellarmine and others give of a true church, there is one mark, without which it is impossible we should be certain which is the true church, and that is, that she professes the true faith and worship of Christ. For this is essential to the church, and there can be no church without it; all other marks may deceive us; for whatever other marks there be, if there be not the true faith and worship of Christ, there cannot be the true church; and therefore when the state of the church, as it is at this day, is broken and divided into different and opposite communions, whoever will find out the true church must examine her doctrine and worship. Bellarmine himself makes the holiness of doctrine one essential mark of the true church, and yet truth is antecedent to holiness, and equally essential. Now this is such a mark of an infallible church, as makes her infallibility useless, when we have found her. For we must understand the true religion before we can know the true church, and can be no more certain which is the true church, than we are which is the true religion; and therefore cannot resolve our faith into the authority of the church, because we can know the true church only by the true faith, and therefore must have some other means of finding out the true faith antecedent to the church's authority; for that which is a mark to know something else by must be first known itself. So that whereas the church's authority is thought so compendious a way to make men infallibly certain of their religion, and to deliver them from those uncertain disputes that are in the world, we cannot be certain which the true church is, on whose authority we must rely, till we have examined that diversity of opinions which divide the Christian church, and have satisfied ourselves on which side the truth lies; and when we have done this, it is too late to appeal to a judge, unless we will undo all we had done before, and then we shall be to seek again which is the true church. And what advantage then has the papist above the protestant in the point of certainty, when they cannot

know which is that church which they may safely trust, without examining the truth of her religion, and judging for themselves, just as we do? We are concerned indeed to know which is the true catholic church, not that we must receive our faith upon her authority, (for in order of nature we must know the true faith before we can know the true church,) but because we are bound to live in communion with the true catholic church of Christ.

Fifthly, And yet if they could find the church without all this trouble, and protestant uncertainty, wherever they place their infallibility, whether in the pope or council, according to their own principles, they cannot have so much as a moral certainty of it. As for the pope, though for argument's sake we should grant a true pope to be infallible, yet it is impossible that any man can be certain that there is a true pope. For the church of Rome teaches, that the intention of the priest is necessary to the sacrament; that though he perform all the external part of it, yet if he do not intend to apply the sacrament to such persons, it is not applied. Now according to these principles, who can tell whether this present pope were ever baptized, or ordained priest or bishop; for if the priests or bishops that did this, did not intend to do it, he is so far from being a true pope, that he is no Christian. Nay, if the priests and bishops which baptized and ordained him, did intend to apply the sacraments to him, yet if those who baptized and ordained them did not intend to do it, then they were no Christians nor bishops themselves, and therefore could not confer orders on him, and so upwards still; which reduces the matter to the greatest uncertainty in the world; for how is it possible to know any man's private intention, when neither words nor actions shall be allowed a sufficient declaration of it? And besides this, if a pope be simoniacally promoted, or ordained by a simoniacal pope, here is an invalidity in his orders, and then what becomes of his infallibility? Nay, what shall we say of that long papal schism, when there were three popes together, John XXIII, Gregory XII, and Benedict XIII, who were all deposed by the council of Constance, and Martin V. chose? Was there never a true pope among all the three? If there were, what authority then had the council to depose them all, and choose a fourth? And who knows to

this day from whence the succeeding popes have derived their succession? which may very much call the popedom and infallibility into question. And then as for councils, which consist of bishops, there is the same uncertainty about them, whether they be true bishops or not, as there is about the pope; and besides this, there are so many disputes what makes a general council when it is regularly called, and when they act *conciliariter*, in such a manner as a council ought to act, to procure the infallible directions of the Spirit, and to give authority to their decrees, that if women and busy people cannot understand the scriptures, and the reasons of their faith, I am sure they are much less able to understand what councils they may safely rely on.

But suppose we did know who this infallible judge is, whether pope or council, and this judge should give us an infallible interpretation of scripture, and an infallible decision of all controversies in religion, which the church of Rome never could be persuaded to do yet, and I believe never will, witness those many fierce disputes which are among men of their own communion; and I think no man is ever the more infallible for a judge, who will not exercise his infallibility; yet if this judge should infallibly determine all the controversies in religion, we must either hear it from his own mouth, or receive it in writing, or take it upon the report of others. As for the first of these, there is not one in the world at this day that was present at the debates of any general council, or heard them pronounce their decrees and definitions, and I believe as few ever heard the pope determine any question *ex cathedra*, which what it means, either they do not well understand, or have no mind to tell us. As for writing; when we see the decrees of a council written, we can have only a moral assurance that these are the decrees of the council; and when we have them, it may be they are much more obscure, and subject to as many different interpretations as the scriptures are; that we can have no better assurance what the sense of the council, than what the sense of the scripture is; as experience tells us it is in the council of Trent, which the Roman doctors differ as much about as protestants do about the sense of scripture; and though the pope of Rome be made the judge of the sense of councils, yet if he will not determine it, what are we the

better? If one pope approves cardinal Bellarmine's exposition of the council, and another M. de Meaux, though directly opposite to each other, as we see at this day, how shall we ever come to an infallible certainty what the council has determined? Has not a protestant, who studies the scripture, and uses the best reason and judgment he has to understand it, as much certainty and infallibility as this comes to? And yet how few are there that have time or learning to read the councils, which is a little more difficult than to read the scriptures in the vulgar tongue; and all these men must trust entirely to the honesty of their priest, who, if he be honest, may be very ignorant, and yet the last resolution of the people's infallibility is into the honesty and skill of their priests; for how infallible soever the pope or council be, they know no more of the matter than what their priests tell them, which is such an infallibility as the meanest protestant has no reason to envy.

This, I think, is sufficient to shew how vain all this talk of infallibility is in the church of Rome; though protestants own themselves to be fallible creatures, yet they were too wise to change their moral certainty for the popish infallibility. Had the church of Rome as good evidence for their faith as the church of England, it might admit of a dispute whether they should reject both, or cast lots which to choose; but thanks be to God, there is no comparison between them, and while we feel ourselves certain, let who will boast of being infallible.

A DISCOURSE

ABOUT

TRADITION:

SHEWING

WHAT IS MEANT BY IT, AND WHAT TRADITION IS TO BE RECEIVED, AND WHAT TRADITION IS TO BE REJECTED.

AN obligation being laid upon us at our baptism, to believe and to do the whole will of God, revealed unto us by Christ Jesus; it concerns every one that would be saved, to inquire where that whole, entire will of God is to be found? where he may so certainly meet with it, and be so informed about it, that he may rest satisfied he hath it all?

And there would be no difficulty in this matter, had not the worldly interests of some men raised controversies about it, and made that intricate and perplexed, which in itself is easy and plain. For the rehearsal of the Apostles' Creed at baptism, and of that alone, as a summary of that faith whose sincere profession entitles us to the grace there conferred, warrants the doctrine of the church of England in its sixth article, that the "holy scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation; so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation."

But this strikes off so many of the doctrines of the present Roman church, which are not to be found in the scripture, nor have any countenance there, that they are forced to say, *the faith once delivered to the saints* (mentioned by St. Jude) is not entirely delivered in the scripture; but we must seek for the rest in the traditions of the church. Which traditions, say

they, are to be received as a part of the rule of faith, with the same religious reverence that we do the holy scripture.

Now, though this is not really the bottom of their hearts, (as will appear before I have done,) but they finally rest for their satisfaction in matters of faith somewhere else; yet this being plausibly pretended by them, in their own justification, that they follow tradition, and in their accusations of us, that we forsake tradition; I shall briefly let all our people see, who are not willing to be deceived, what they are to judge and say in this business of tradition: about which a great noise is made, as if we durst not stand to it, and as if they of the Roman church steadfastly kept it without any variation; neither of which is true, as I shall plainly shew in this short discourse,—

The meaning of the word.

Which for clearness' sake shall begin with the meaning of the word *tradition*: which in English is no more than *delivering* unto another; and by a figure signifies *the matter which is delivered*; and among Christians, *the doctrine of our religion* delivered to us. And there being two ways of delivering doctrines to us, either by writing or by word of mouth, it signifies either of them indifferently: the scriptures, as you shall see presently, being traditions. But custom hath determined this word to the last of these ways, and distinguished tradition from scriptures or writings: at least from the holy writings; and made it signify that which is not delivered in the holy scriptures, or writings. For though the scripture be tradition also, and the very first tradition, and the fountain of all true and legitimate antiquity; yet in common language, traditions now are such ancient doctrines as are conveyed to us some other way; whether by word of mouth, as some will have it, from one generation to another; or by human writings, which are not of the same authority with the holy scriptures.

How to judge of them.

Now there is no better way to judge aright of such traditions, than by considering these four things:

First, the authors of them, whence they come.

Secondly, the matter of them.

Thirdly, their authority.

Fourthly. The means by which we come to know they derive themselves from such authors as they pretend unto; and consequently have any authority to demand admission into our belief.

1. For the first of these, every body knows and confesses that all traditions suppose some author, from whom they originally come, and who is the deliverer of those doctrines to Christian people; who being told by the present church, or any person in it, that such and such doctrines are to be received, though not contained in the holy scriptures, because they are traditions, ought in conscience to inquire from whom those traditions come, or who first delivered them: by which means they will be able to judge what credit is to be given to them, when it is once cleared to them from what authors they really come. Now whatsoever is delivered to us in Christianity comes either from Christ, or from his apostles, or from the church, (either in general or in part,) or from private doctors in the church. There is nothing now called a tradition in the Christian world but proceeds from one or from all of these four originals.

2. And the matter which they deliver to us, (which is next to be considered,) is either concerning that faith and godly life which is necessary to salvation; or concerning opinions, rites, ceremonies, customs, and things belonging to order. Both which, as I said, may be conveyed either by writing or without writing; by the Divine writings, or by human writings: though these two ways are not alike certain.

3. Now it is evident to every understanding, that things of both sorts, which are delivered to us, have their authority from the credit of the author from whence they first come. If that be Divine, their authority is Divine; if it be only human, their authority can be no more. And among human authors if their credit be great, the authority of what they deliver is great; if it be little, its authority is little; and accordingly must be accepted with greater or lesser reverence.

Upon which score, whatsoever can be made to appear to come from Christ, it hath the highest authority, and ought to be received with absolute submission to it, because he is the Son of God. And likewise, whatsoever appears to have been delivered by the apostles in his name hath the same authority;

they being his ministers, sent by him, as he was by God the Father, and endued with a Divine power, which attested unto them. In like manner, whatsoever is delivered by the church hath the same authority which the church hath: which though it be not equal to the foregoing, (the church having no such Divine power nor infallible judgment as the apostles had,) yet is of such weight and moment, that it ought to be reverenced next to theirs. I mean the sense of the whole church, which must be acknowledged also to be of greater or lesser authority, as it was nearer or further off from the times of the apostles. What was delivered by their immediate followers ought to weigh so much with us, as to have the greatest human authority; and to be looked upon as little less than Divine. The universal consent of the next generation is an authority approaching as near to the former as the ages do one to another. But what is delivered in latter times hath less human authority, though pretending to come, but without proof, from more early days; and hath no authority at all, if it contradict the sense of the church, when it was capable to be better acquainted with the mind of Christ and of his apostles.

As for particular churches, their authority ought to be reverenced by every member of them, when they profess to deliver sincerely the sense of the church universal; and when they determine, as they have power to do, controversies of faith, or decree rites and ceremonies (not contrary to God's word) in which every one ought to acquiesce.

But we cannot say the same of that which comes from any private doctor in the church, modern or ancient, which can have no greater authority than he himself was of; but is more or less credible, according as he was more or less diligent, knowing, and strictly religious.

4. But to all this it is necessary that it do sufficiently appear, that such doctrines do really come from those authors whose traditions they pretend to be. This is the great and the only thing about which there is any question among sober and judicious persons: how to be sufficiently assured that any thing which is not delivered unto us in the scriptures doth certainly come; for instance, from Christ or his holy apostles. For in this all Christians are agreed, that whatsoever was delivered by Christ from God the Father, or by the apostles

from Christ, is to be embraced and firmly retained, whether it be written or not written; that makes no difference at all, if we can be certain it came from him or them. For what is contained in the holy scripture hath not its authority because it is written, but because it came from God. If Christ said a thing, it is enough, we ought to submit unto it; but we must first know that he said it: and let the means of knowing it be what they will, if we can certainly know he said it, we yield to it.

But how we can be certain (at this distance of time from his being in the world) that any thing, now pretending to it, was said by Christ, which is not recorded in the holy scriptures, there is the business. And it is a matter of such importance, that it cannot be expected any man should be satisfied without very good evidence of it; but he may very reasonably question, whether many things be not falsely ascribed unto him, and unto his apostles, which never came from them. Nay, whether those things which are affirmed to be the doctrines of the primitive church, and of the whole church, be not of some later original; and of some particular church, or private doctors in the church; unto whose authority that reverence is not due, which ought to be paid, and which we willingly give, unto the former.

Now according to this state of the matter, any good Christian among us (who is desirous to know the truth, and to preserve himself from error) may easily discern what traditions ought to be received and held fast, and what we are not bound unto without any alteration; and what are not to be received at all, but to be rejected; and how far those things are from being credible, which the Roman church now would obtrude upon us, under the name of apostolical, or ancient traditions; without any authority from the holy scriptures, or (in truth) any authority but their own, and some private doctors, whose opinions cannot challenge an absolute submission to them.

But to give every one that would be rightly informed fuller satisfaction in this business, I shall not content myself with this general discourse, but shall particularly and distinctly shew what traditions we own and heartily receive; and then, what traditions we cannot own, but with good reason refuse.

These shall be the two parts of this short treatise; wherein I shall endeavour that our people may be instructed not merely to reject errors, but also to affirm the truth.

PART I.

What traditions we receive.

I. And in the first place we acknowledge, that what is now holy scripture was once only tradition, properly so called; that is, doctrine by word of mouth. In this we all agree, I say, that the whole gospel or doctrine of Christ, which is now upon record in those books we call the scriptures, was once unwritten, when it was first preached by our blessed Saviour and his apostles.

Which must be noted, to remove that small objection with which they of the Roman church are wont to trouble some people's minds, merely from the name of *traditions*; which St. Paul, in his Epistles, requires those to whom he writes carefully to observe: particularly in that famous place, 2 Thess. ii. 15, where we find this exhortation, *Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.*

Behold, say they, here are things not written, but delivered by word of mouth, which the Thessalonians are commanded to hold. Very true, (should the people of our church say to those that insist upon this,) but, behold also, we beseech you, what the traditions are of which the apostle here writes; and mark also when it was that they were partly unwritten.

For the first of these, it is manifest that he means by *traditions* the doctrines which we now read in the holy scriptures. For the very first word, *therefore*, is an indication that this verse is an inference from what he had said in the foregoing. Now the things he before treated of are the grand doctrines of the gospel, or the way of salvation revealed unto us by Christ Jesus, from God the Father, who *hath from the beginning* (saith he, ver. 13, 14.) *chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: whereunto he hath called you*, &c. This is the sum of the gospel, and whatsoever he hath delivered unto them about these matters, of their sanctification, or of their faith, or of their salvation, by

obtaining the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, (to which they were chosen and called through their sanctification and faith,) this he exhorts them to hold fast; whether it was contained in this Epistle, or in his former preaching; for he had not occasion now to write all that he had formerly delivered by word of mouth.

Which afterward was put into writing: for mark (which is the second thing) the time when some things remained unwritten; which was, when this Epistle was sent to the Thessalonians. Then some things concerning their salvation were not contained in this letter; but, as yet, delivered only by word of mouth unto this church. I say, to this church; for it doth not follow that all churches whatsoever were at the time of the writing of this Epistle without the doctrine of the gospel completely written, because among the Thessalonians some traditions or doctrines were as yet unwritten. Which can in reason be extended no further than to themselves, and to this Epistle; which did not contain all the evangelical doctrine, though other writings, which it is possible were then extant in some other churches, did.

And, I say, as yet unwritten in that church; because the Thessalonians, no doubt, had afterward more communicated to them in writing besides this Epistle, or the former either, viz. all the Gospels, and the Acts of the Apostles, and other apostolical epistles, which we now enjoy. Which writings, we may be confident, contain the traditions which the apostle had delivered to the Thessalonians by word; concerning the incarnation, birth, life, miracles, death, resurrection, and ascension of our blessed Saviour; and concerning the coming of the Holy Ghost, and the mission of the apostles; and all the rest which is there recorded for our everlasting instruction.

And therefore it is in vain to argue from this place, that there are still, at this day, some unwritten traditions which we are to follow; unless the apostle had said, Hold the traditions which ye have been taught by word, which shall never be written. And it is in vain for us to inquire after any such traditions, or to rely upon them when they are offered unto us; unless we were sure that there was something necessary to our salvation delivered in their sermons which was never

to be delivered in writing; and unless we knew where to find it, as certainly as we do that which they have committed to writing.

And it is to no more purpose to shew us the word *tradition*, in other places of St. Paul's writings, particularly in the third chapter of the same Epistle, ver. 6, where by *tradition* St. Chrysostom understands the apostle's example, which he had given them; and so it follows, ver. 7, *for yourselves know how you ought to follow us*, &c.; or it may refer to the commandment he had given them in his former Epistle, iv. 11. (which the reader may be pleased to compare with this,) but cannot with any colour be expounded to signify any doctrine of faith about which the Roman church now contends with us. For it is plain, it hath respect to their good manners and orderly living; for the information of which we need go no whither but to the holy scriptures, wherein we are taught fully enough how we ought to walk and please God in all things.

The same may be said of that place, 1 Cor. xi. 2, *Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things, and keep the traditions*, (or *ordinances*, as we render it, or *precepts*, as the vulgar Latin itself hath it.) *as I delivered them to you.* For we are so observant of what he hath delivered, that we are confident if St. Paul were now alive, and in this church, he would praise us (as he doth the Corinthians) for keeping the traditions as he delivered them; and on the contrary, reprove and condemn the Roman church for not keeping them, as they were first delivered. And we have good ground for this confidence, there being an instance in that very chapter which demonstrates our fidelity in preserving the very first traditions, and their unfaithfulness in letting them go. For he tells us, ver. 23, that he had *delivered to them what he had received of the Lord*; and that which he received and delivered was about the whole communion (as you may read there and in the following verses, 24, 25.) in both kinds; the cup as well as the bread. Thus, he saith, the Lord appointed it, and thus he delivered it; and this tradition we keep entire, as he received it of the Lord, and delivered it to his church in this Epistle, which is a part of the holy scripture; whereas they do not keep it, but have broken this Divine tradition, and

give the communion of Christ's body and blood otherwise than St. Paul delivered, keeping the cup from the people.

By which, I desire all that love the Lord Jesus in sincerity, to judge which church keeps closest to the apostolical tradition, (for so St. Paul calls this doctrine of the communion in both kinds; that which he delivered, or left as a tradition with them,) they that stick to what is unquestionably the apostolical doctrine, or they that leave it, to follow those doctrines (or presumptions rather) which at the best are very dubious and uncertain.

And further, I desire all that read this paper to consider, whether it be reasonable to think that those rites, which have no authority in the holy scripture, (but were instituted, perhaps, by the apostles,) have been kept pure and uncorrupted, according to their first intention; when those sacred rites (for instance, the holy eucharist) are not preserved entire, which are manifestly ordained in the holy writings.

And so much may serve for the first thing; for it would be too long to explain all the rest of the places of holy scripture, which they are wont to allege (though the word *tradition* be not mentioned in them) to give a colour to their present pretences; how pertinently, may be judged by these places now considered.

II. Secondly then, that word of God which was once unwritten, being now written; we acknowledge ourselves to be much indebted to the church of God in all foregoing ages, which hath preserved the scriptures and delivered them down to us, as his word; which we ought to do unto those that shall succeed us, as our church teacheth us in its twentieth article; where the church is affirmed to be "a witness and a keeper of holy writ."

This tradition we own; it being universal, continued, uninterrupted, and undenied. Though, in truth, this is tradition in another sense of the word; not signifying the doctrine delivered unto us, but the manner and means of its delivery.

And therefore if any member of our church be pressed by those of the Romish persuasion with this argument for their present traditions, that scripture itself is come to us by tradition, let them answer thus: Very right, it is so, and we thank God for it; therefore let this be no part of our dispute; it

being a thing presupposed in all discourses about religion, a thing agreed among all Christian people, that we read the word of God when we read the holy scriptures. Which being delivered to us, and accepted by us as his word, we see no necessity of any other tradition or doctrine which is not to be found there, or cannot be proved from thence; for they tell us, they are able to make even the *man of God* wise unto salvation.

And if they press you again, and say, how do you know that some books are canonical and others not? is it not by a constant tradition? Answer them again in this manner: Yes, this is true also, and would to God you would stand to this universal tradition, and receive no other books but what have been so delivered. But know withal, that this universal tradition of the books of scripture (unto which you have added several apocryphal writings, which have not been constantly delivered, as those we receive) is no part of the tradition or doctrine delivered; that is, no doctrine distinct from the scriptures, but only the instrument or means of conveying that doctrine unto us.

In short, it is the fidelity of the church with whom the canon of scripture was deposed; but is no more a doctrine, not written in the scripture, than the tradition or delivery of the code, or book of the civil law, is any opinion or law not written in that code.

And we are more assured of the fidelity of the church herein, than the civilians can be assured of the faithfulness of their predecessors in preserving and delivering the books of their law to them; because these holy books were always kept with a greater care than any other books whatsoever; and in the acceptance of them also we find there was great caution used, that they might not be deceived; all Christians looking upon them to be of such importance, that all religion, they thought, was concerned in them.

Of which this is an argument, that they who sought to destroy the Christian religion in the primitive times, sought nothing more than to destroy the Bible; which they were wont to demand of those who were suspected to be Christians, to be delivered up to them, that they might burn it. And according as men behaved themselves in this trial, so they were reputed to be Christians or not Christians. And the traditors,

as they were called, that is, they who delivered the holy scriptures into the hands of the pagans, were looked upon by Christians as men that were content to part with their religion. For which there could be no reason, but that they thought Christian religion to be therein contained, and to be betrayed by those who delivered them to be burnt.

By which I have proved more than I intended in this part of my discourse—that in the holy scriptures the whole will of God, concerning our salvation, is contained. Which is the true question between us and the church of Rome; not whether the scriptures be delivered to us as the word of God or no, (in this our people ought to tell them we are all agreed,) but whether they have been delivered as the whole will of God. And from that argument now mentioned, and many more, we conclude, that universal tradition having directed us unto these books and no other, they direct us sufficiently, without any other doctrines, unto God, and to our everlasting rest.

And if they urge you further, and say, that the very credit of the scripture depends upon tradition; tell them that it is a speech not to be endured, if they mean thereby that it gives the scripture its authority, (and if they mean less, we are agreed, as hath been already said,) for it is to say, that man gives authority to God's word. Whereas, in truth, the holy scriptures are not therefore of Divine authority because the church hath delivered them so to be; but the church hath delivered them so to be because it knew them to be of such authority. And if the church should have conceived or taught otherwise of these writings, than as of the undoubted oracles of God, she would have erred damnably in such a tradition.

I shall sum up what hath been said in this second particular in a few words. Christ and his apostles at first taught the church by word of mouth; but afterward that which they preached was, by the commandment of God, committed to writing, and delivered unto the church, to be the ground of our faith. Which is no more than Irenæus hath said in express words, (lib. iii. c. 1.) speaking of them by whom the gospel came into all nations; "which they then preached, but afterward, by the will of God, delivered unto us in the scriptures, to be, in time to come, the foundation and pillar of our faith."

III. And further, we likewise acknowledge that the sum and substance of the Christian religion, contained in the scriptures, hath been delivered down to us, even from the apostles' days, in other ways or forms besides the scriptures. For instance, in the baptismal vow, in the Creed, in the prayers and hymns of the church. Which we may call *traditions* if we please: but they bring down to us no new doctrine, but only deliver, in an abridgment, the same Christianity which we find in the scriptures.

Upon this there is no need that I should enlarge; but I proceed further to affirm,

IV. That we reverently receive also the unanimous tradition or doctrine of the church in all ages, which determines the meaning of the holy scripture, and makes it more clear and unquestionable in any point of faith, wherein we can find it hath declared its sense. For we look upon this tradition as nothing else but the scripture unfolded; not a new thing, which is not in the scripture, but the scripture explained and made more evident.

And thus some part of the Nicene Creed may be called a *tradition*, as it hath expressly delivered unto us the sense of the church of God concerning that great article of our faith, that Jesus Christ is "the Son of God." Which they teach us was always thus understood; the Son of God, "begotten of his Father before all worlds, and of the same substance with the Father."

But this tradition supposes the scripture for its ground, and delivers nothing but what the Fathers, assembled at Nice, believed to be contained there, and was first fetched from thence. For we find in Theodoret (lib. i. c. 6.) that the famous emperor Constantine admonished those Fathers, in all their questions and debates, to consult only with these heavenly inspired writings; "because the evangelical and apostolical books, and the oracles of the old prophets, do evidently instruct us what to think in Divine matters." This is so clear a testimony, that in those days they made this the complete rule of their faith, whereby they ended controversies, (which was the reason that in several other synods we find they were wont to lay the Bible before them,) and that there is nothing in the Nicene Creed but what is to be found in the Bible; that cardinal Bellarmine

hath nothing to reply to it but this; "Constantine was indeed a great emperor, but no great doctor." Which is rather a scoff than an answer; and casts a scorn not only upon him, but upon that great council, who, as the same Theodoret witnesseth, assented unto that speech of Constantine. So it there follows in these words; "the most of the synod were obedient to what he had discoursed, and embraced both mutual concord and sound doctrine."

And accordingly St. Hilary, a little after, extols his son Constantius for this, that he adhered to the scriptures; and blames him only for not attending to the true catholic sense of them. His words are these (in his little book which he delivered to Constantius): "I truly admire thee, O lord Constantius the emperor, who desirest a faith according to what is written." They pretended to no other in those days; but (as he speaks a little after) looked upon him "that refused this, as Antichrist." It was only required that they should receive their faith out of God's books, not merely according to the words of them, but according to their true meaning, (because many "spake scripture without scripture, and pretended to faith without faith," as his words are,) and herein catholic and constant tradition was to guide them. For whatsoever was contrary to what the whole church had received and held from the beginning, could not in reason be thought to be the meaning of that scripture which was alleged to prove it. And, on the other side, the church pretended to no more than to be a witness of the received sense of the scriptures, which were the bottom upon which they built this faith.

Thus I observe Hegesippus saith, (in Euseb. his History, l. iv. c. 22.) that when he was at Rome he met with a great many bishops, and that he "received the very same doctrine from them all." And then, a little after, tells us what that was, and whence they derived it, saying, "that in every succession of bishops, and in every city, so they held, as the law preached, and as the prophets, and as the Lord." That is, according to the doctrine of the Old and New Testament.

I shall conclude this particular with a pregnant passage, which I remember in a famous divine of our church, (Dr. Jackson, in his Treatise of the Catholic Church, chap. 22.) who writes to this effect:

That tradition, which was of so much use in the primitive church, was not unwritten traditions or customs, commended or ratified by the supposed infallibility of any visible church, but did especially consist in the confessions or registers of particular churches. And the unanimous consent of so many several churches, as exhibited their confessions to the Nicene council, out of such forms as had been framed and taught before this controversy arose, about the divinity of Christ; and that voluntarily and freely, (these churches being not dependent one upon another; nor overswayed by any authority over them; nor misled by faction to frame their confessions of faith by imitation, or according to some pattern set them,) was a pregnant argument that this faith, wherein they all agreed, had been delivered to them by the apostles and their followers, and was the true meaning of the holy writings in this great article; and evidently proved, that Arius did obtrude such interpretations of scripture as had not been heard of before, or were but the sense of some private persons in the church, and not of the generality of believers.

In short, the unanimous consent of so many distinct visible churches as exhibited their several confessions, catechisms, or testimonies, of their own or forefathers' faith unto the council of Nice, was an argument of the same force and efficacy against Arius and his partakers, as the general consent and practice of all nations in worshipping a Divine power in all ages is against atheists. Nothing but the ingrafted notion of a Deity could have induced so many several nations, so much different in natural disposition, in civil discipline and education, to affect or practise the duty of adoration. And nothing but the evidence of the *ingrafted word*, (as St. James calls the gospel,) delivered by Christ and his apostles in the holy scriptures, could have kept so many several churches as communicated their confessions unto that council, in the unity of the same faith.

The like may be said of the rest of the four first general councils, whose decrees are a great confirmation of our belief, because they deliver to us the consent of the churches of Christ, in those great truths which they assert out of the holy scriptures.

And could there any traditive interpretation of the whole

scripture be produced, upon the authority of such original tradition as that now named, we would most thankfully and joyfully receive it. But there never was any such pretended; no, not by the Roman church; whose doctors differ among themselves about the meaning of hundreds of places in the Bible. Which they would not do sure, nor spend their time unprofitably, in making the best conjectures they are able, if they knew of any exposition of those places in which all Christian doctors had agreed from the beginning.

V. But more than this, we allow that tradition gives us a considerable assistance in such points as are not in so many letters and syllables contained in the scriptures, but may be gathered from thence by good and manifest reasoning. Or, in plainer words, perhaps, whatsoever tradition justifies any doctrine that may be proved by the scriptures, though not found in express terms there, we acknowledge to be of great use, and readily receive and follow it; as serving very much to establish us more firmly in that truth, when we see all Christians have adhered to it.

This may be called a *confirming tradition;* of which we have an instance in the doctrine of infant baptism, which some ancient Fathers call an *apostolical tradition.* Not that it cannot be proved by any place of scripture, no such matter: for though we do not find it written in so many words, that infants are to be baptized, or that the apostles baptized infants; yet it may be proved out of the scriptures; and the Fathers themselves, who call it an apostolical tradition, do allege testimonies of the scriptures to make it good. And therefore we may be sure they comprehend the scriptures within the name of apostolical tradition; and believed that this doctrine was gathered out of the scriptures, though not expressly treated of there.

In like manner we, in this church, assert the authority of bishops above presbyters, by a Divine right, as appears by the book of consecration of bishops, where the person to be ordained to this office expresses his belief, "that he is truly called to this ministration, according to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ." Now this we are persuaded may be plainly enough proved, to any man that is ingenuous and will fairly consider things out of the holy scriptures, without the help of

tradition: but we also take in the assistance of this for the conviction of gainsayers; and by the perpetual practice and tradition of the church from the beginning, confirm our scripture proofs so strongly, that he seems to us very obstinate, or extremely prejudiced, that yields not to them. And therefore to make our doctrine in this point the more authentic, our church hath put both these proofs together, in the preface to the Form of giving Orders, which begins in these words; "It is evident unto all men diligently reading holy scripture and ancient authors, that from the apostles' time there have been three orders of ministers in Christ's church, bishops, priests, and deacons."

I hope nobody among us is so weak as to imagine, when he reads this, that by admitting tradition to be of such use and force as I have mentioned, we yield too much to the popish cause, which supports itself by this pretence. But if any one shall suggest this to any of our people, let them reply, that it is but the pretence, and only by the name of tradition, that the Romish church supports itself; for true tradition is as great a proof against popery, as it is for episcopacy. The very foundation of the pope's empire (which is his succession in St. Peter's supremacy) is utterly subverted by this; the constant tradition of the church being evidently against it. And therefore let us not lose this advantage we have against them, by ignorantly refusing to receive true and constant tradition; which will be so far from leading us into their church, that it will never suffer us to think of being of it, while it remains so opposite to that which is truly apostolical.

I conclude this with the direction which our church gives to preachers in the book of Canons, 1571, (in the title *Concionatores*,) that "no man shall teach the people any thing to be held and believed by them religiously, but what is consentaneous to the doctrine of the Old and New Testament; and what the catholic Fathers and ancient bishops have gathered out of that very doctrine." This is our rule whereby we are to guide ourselves: which was set us on purpose to preserve our preachers from broaching any idle, novel, or popish doctrines, as appears by the conclusion of that injunction, "Vain and old wives' opinions and heresies, and popish errors, abhorring from the doctrine and faith of Christ, they shall not

teach; nor any thing at all whereby the unskilful multitude may be inflamed, either to the study of novelty, or to contention."

VI. But though nothing may be taught as a piece of religion, which hath not the forenamed original; yet I must add, that those things which have been universally believed, and not contrary to scripture, though not written at all there, nor to be proved from thence, we do receive as pious opinions. For instance, the perpetual virginity of the mother of God our Saviour, which is so likely a thing, and so universally received, that I do not see why we should not look upon it as a genuine apostolical tradition.

VII. I have but one thing more to add, which is, that we allow also the traditions of the church, about matters of order, rites, and ceremonies. Only we do not take them to be parts of God's worship; and if they be not appointed in the holy scriptures, we believe they may be altered by the same, or the like authority, with that which ordained them. So our church hath excellently and fully resolved us, concerning such matters, in the thirty-fourth article of religion; where there are three things asserted concerning such traditions as these.

First, "It is not necessary that traditions and ceremonies" (they are the very first words of the article) "be in all places, one or utterly alike; for at all times they have been divers, and may be changed according to the diversities of countries, times, and men's manners, so that nothing be ordained against God's word." But then, to prevent all disorders and confusions that men might make in the church, by following their own private fancies and humours, the next thing which is decreed is this,

Secondly, That "whosoever through his own private judgment, willingly and purposely doth openly break the traditions and ceremonies of the church, which be not repugnant to the word of God, and be ordained and approved by common authority, ought to be rebuked openly, (that others may fear to do the like,) as he that offendeth against the common order of the church, and hurteth the authority of the magistrate, and woundeth the consciences of the weak brethren."

Lastly, It is there declared, that "every particular, or national church, hath authority to ordain, change, and abolish

ceremonies or rites of the church, ordained only by man's authority, so that all things be done to edifying."

This is sufficient to shew what we believe concerning traditions, about matters of order and decency.

VIII. As for what is delivered in matters of doctrine or order, by any private doctor in the church, or by any particular church, it appears by what hath been said, that it cannot be taken to be more than the private opinion of that man, or the particular decree of that church, and can have no more authority than they have; that is, cannot oblige all Christians, unless it be contained in the holy scripture.

Now such are the traditions which the Roman church would impose upon us; and impose upon us after a strange fashion, as you shall see in the second part of this discourse: unto which I shall proceed presently, when I have left you this brief reflection on what hath been said in this first part.

Our people may hereby be admonished not to suffer themselves to be deceived and abused by words and empty names, without their sense and meaning. Nothing is more common than this, especially in the business of traditions: about which a great stir is raised: and it is commonly given out, that we refuse all traditions; than which nothing is more false, for we refuse none truly so called; that is, doctrines delivered by Christ or his apostles. No, we refuse nothing at all, because it is unwritten, but merely because we are not sure it is delivered by that authority to which we ought to submit.

Whatsoever is delivered to us by our Lord and his apostles, we receive as the very word of God: which we think is sufficiently declared in the holy scriptures. But if any can certainly prove, by any authority equal to that which brings the scriptures to us, that there is any thing else delivered by them, we receive that also. The controversy will soon be at an end; for we are ready to embrace it, when any such thing can be produced.

Nay, we have that reverence for those who succeeded the apostles, that what they have unanimously delivered to us, as the sense of any doubtful place, we receive it, and seek no further. There is no dispute whether or no we should entertain it.

To the decrees of the church also we submit in matters of

decency and order; yea, and acquiesce in its authority, when it determines doubtful opinions.

But we cannot receive that as a doctrine of Christ which we know is but the tradition of man; nor keep the ordinances of the ancient church in matters of decency, so unalterably as never to vary from them, because they themselves did not intend them to be of everlasting obligation: as appears by the changes that have been made in several times and places, even in some things which are mentioned in the holy scriptures; being but customs suited to those ages and countries.

In short, traditions we do receive; but not all that are called by that name. Those which have sufficient authority, but not those which are imposed upon us by the sole authority of one particular church, assuming a power over all the rest. And so I come to the second part.

PART II.

What Traditions we do not receive.

I. And in the first place, we do not believe that there is any tradition which contains another word of God, which is not in the scripture, or cannot be proved from thence. In this consists the main difference between us, and them of the Romish persuasion; who affirm that Divine truth which we are all bound to receive, to be partly written, partly delivered by word of mouth without writing. Which is not only the affirmation of the council of Trent, but delivered in more express terms in the preface to the Roman Catechism, drawn up by their order; where we find these words, (towards the conclusion of it,) "The whole doctrine to be delivered to the faithful, is contained in the word of God; which" (word of God) "is distributed into scripture and tradition."

This is a full and plain declaration of their mind, with which we can by no means agree, for divers unanswerable reasons.

First, Not only because the scriptures testify to their own perfection; which they affirm to be so great, as to be able to complete the divinest men in the church of Christ, in all points of heavenly wisdom, 2 Tim. iii. 15—17. But,

Secondly, Because the constant tradition of the church (even

of the Roman church anciently) is, that in the scriptures we may find all that is necessary to be known and believed to salvation. I must not fill up this paper with authorities to this purpose; but we avow this unto the people of our church for a certain truth, which hath been demonstrated by many of our writers; who have shewn, that the ancient doctors universally speak the language of St. Paul, 1 Cor. iv. 6. *not to think above that which is written.* I will mention only these memorable words of Tertullian, who is as earnest an advocate as any for ritual traditions, but having to deal with Hermogenes in a question of faith, "Whether all things in the beginning were made of nothing?" urges him in this manner; I have nowhere yet read, that all things were made out of a subject matter. "If it be written, let those of Hermogenes his shop shew it; if it be not written, let them fear that woe which is allotted to such as add or take away." The very same answer should our people make to those that would have them receive any thing as an article of faith, which is not delivered to them by this truly apostolical church wherein we live. "If it be written, let us see it; if it be not, take heed how you add to the undoubted word of God." We receive the holy scriptures, as able to make us wise to salvation. So they themselves tell us; and so runs the true tradition of the church, which you of the Romish persuasion have forsaken, but we adhere unto.

Thirdly, And we have this further reason so to do, because if part of God's word had been written, and part unwritten, we cannot but believe there would have been some care taken in the written word, not only to let us know so much, but also inform us whither we should resort to find it, and how we should know it; if it be absolutely necessary for us to be acquainted with it. But there is no such notice, nor any such directions left us: nor can any man give us any certain rule to follow in this matter, but only this; "To examine all traditions by the scripture, as the supreme rule of faith; and to admit only such as are conformable thereunto."

Fourthly, For which we have still this further reason, that no sooner were they that first delivered and received the holy scriptures gone out of the world, but we find men began to add their own fancies unto the catholic truth, which made it absolutely necessary to keep to the tradition in the holy scrip-

tures, all other growing uncertain. This is observed by Hegesippus himself, (in Eusebius, l. iii. c. 32,) that "the church remained a chaste virgin, and the spouse of Christ, till the sacred quire of the apostles, and the next generation of them, who had had the honour to be their auditors, were extinct; and then there began a plain conspiracy of impious, atheistical error, by the fraud of teachers, who delivered other doctrine." Which was a thing St. Paul feared even in his own lifetime, about the church of Corinth, (2 Cor. xi. 3,) lest the Devil, like a wily serpent, should beguile them, and corrupt their minds from the original simplicity of the Christian doctrine wherein they were first instructed. And if it were attempted then, it was less difficult, and therefore more endeavoured afterward, as shall appear anon by plain history; which tells how several persons pretended they received this and that from an apostle. Some of which traditions were presently rejected; others received, and afterwards found to be impostures: which shews there was so much false dealing in the case, that it was hard for men to know what was truly apostolical in those days, if it came to them this way only; and therefore impossible to be discerned by us now, at this great distance of time from the apostles, who we know delivered the true faith; but we have no reason to rely upon mere tradition, without scripture, for any part of that faith; when we see what cheats were put upon men by that means, even then, when they had better helps to detect them than we have.

It is true, the Fathers sometimes urge tradition as a proof of what they say. But we must know, that the scriptures were not presently communicated among some barbarous nations; and there were some heretics also, who either denied the scriptures, or some part of them: and in these cases it was necessary to appeal to the tradition that was in the church, and to convince them by the doctrine taught everywhere by all the bishops. But that (mark this, I pray you) of which they convinced them by this argument, was nothing but what is taught in the scripture.

Fifthly, With which we cannot suffer any thing to be equalled in authority, unless we could see it confirmed by the same or equal testimony. This is the great reason of all, why we cannot admit any unwritten traditions to be a part of the

word of God, which we are bound to believe; because we cannot find any truths so delivered to us, as those in the holy scriptures. They come to us with as full a testimony as can be desired of their Divine original; but so do none of those things which are now obtruded on us by the Romish church, under the name of traditions or unwritten word of God.

For the primitive church had the very first copies and authentic writings of those books called the New Testament, delivered by the apostles' own hands to them. And those books confirm the scriptures of the Old Testament; and they were both delivered to posterity by that primitive church, witnessing from whom they received them; who carefully kept them as the most precious treasure; so that this written word hath had the general approbation and testimony of the whole church of Christ in every age, until this day, witnessing that it is Divine. And it hath been the constant business of the doctors of the church, to expound this word of God to the people; and their books are full of citations out of the scripture, all agreeing in substance with what we now read in them. Nay, the very enemies of Christianity, such as Celsus, Porphyry, Julian, never questioned but these are the writings of which the apostles were the authors, and which they delivered. Besides, the marks they have in themselves, of a divine Spirit which indited them; they all tending to breed and preserve in men a sense of God, and to make them truly virtuous.

Not one word of which can be said for any of those unwritten traditions, which the Roman church pretend to be a part of God's word. For we have no testimony of them in the holy scriptures. Nor doth the primitive church affirm she received them from the apostles, as she did the written word. Nor have they the perpetual consent and general approbation of the whole church ever since. Nor are they frequently quoted, as the words of scripture are, upon all occasions, by the doctors of the church. Nor do we find them to be the doctrine which was constantly taught the people. Nor is there any notice taken of them by the enemies of our faith, whose assaults are all against the scriptures. In short, they are so far from having any true authority, that counterfeit testimonies and forged writings have been their great sup-

porters. Besides the plain drift of them, which is not to make all men better, but to make some richer; and the manifest danger men are in, by many of them, to be drawn away from God, to put their trust and confidence in creatures: as might be shewn, if this paper would contain it, in their doctrines of papal supremacy, purgatory, invocation of saints, image worship, and divers others.

Concerning which we say, as St. Cyprian doth to Pompeius about another matter, "If it be commanded in the Gospels, or in the Epistles of the Apostles, or in their Acts, that they should not be baptized who return from any heresy, but only be received by imposition of hands, *let this Divine and holy tradition be observed.*" The same say we; If there be any thing in the Gospels, in the Epistles, in the Acts, concerning invocation of saints, concerning the praying souls out of purgatory, &c. let that Divine, that holy tradition be observed. But if it be not there, "what obstinacy is this," (as it follows a little after in that Epistle lxxiv.) "what presumption, to prefer human tradition before the Divine disposition or ordinance!"

A great deal more there is in that place, and in others of that holy martyr, to bring all to the source, the root, the original of the Divine tradition; for then human error ceases; which original tradition he affirms to be, what is delivered in the holy scriptures; which delivering to us the whole will of God concerning us, we look after no other tradition, but what explains and confirms, and is consonant to this. For we believe that what is delivered to us by the scriptures, and what is delivered by true tradition, are but two several ways of bringing us acquainted with the same Christian truth, not with different parts of that truth.

And so I have done with the first thing; the sum of which is this: We do not receive any tradition, or doctrine, to supply the defect of the scripture, in some necessary article of faith; which doctrines they of Rome pretend to have one and the same author with the scripture, viz. God; and therefore, to be received with the same pious affection and reverence; but cannot tell us where we may find them, how we shall discern true from false, nor give us any assurance of their truth, but we must take them purely upon their word.

Now how little reason we have to trust to that, will appear in the second thing I have to add; which is this,

II. That we dare not receive any thing whatsoever merely upon the credit of the Roman church; no, not "that Divine, that holy tradition" before spoken of, viz. the scripture: which we do not believe only upon their testimony; both because they are but a part of the church, and therefore not the sole keepers of Divine truth; and they are a corrupted part, who have not approved themselves faithful in the keeping what was committed to them.

Let our people diligently mark this, that traditions never were, nor are now, only in the keeping of the Roman church; and that these things are widely different, the tradition of the whole church, or of the greatest and best part of it; and the tradition of one part of the church, and the least part of it; and the worst part also, and most depraved.

What is warranted by the authority of the whole church, I have shewn before, we reverently receive; but we cannot take that for current tradition, which is warranted only by a small part of the church, and we give very little credit to what is warranted only by that part of it which is Roman. Because,

1. First, This church hath not preserved so carefully as other churches have done, the first and original tradition, which is in the scriptures; but suffered them to be shamefully corrupted. Every one knows that there is a Latin vulgar edition of the Bible, (which they of that church prefer before the original,) none of which they preserved heretofore from manifest depravations; nor have been able, since they were told of the faults, to purge away, so as to canonize any edition, without permitting great numbers in their newest and most approved Bibles. Isidore Clarius, in his preface to his edition, complains, that he found these holy writings defaced with innumerable errors; eight thousand of which, that he thought most material, he saith, he amended; and yet left he knew not how many lesser ones untouched: after which (the council of Trent having vouched this vulgar Latin edition for the only authentic) pope Sixtus V. published, out of the several copies that were abroad, one, which he straitly charged to be received as the only true vulgar, from which none should dare to vary in a tittle. And yet two years were scarce

passed, before Clement VIII. found many defects and corruptions still remaining in that edition; and therefore published another with the very same charge, that none else should be received.

Which evidently shews, they have suffered the holy books to be so foully abused, that they know not how to amend the errors that are crept into them, nor can tell which is the true Bible. For these two Bibles thus equally authorized, as the only authentic ones, abound not only with manifest diversities, but with contradictions, or contrarieties, one to the other. Whereby all Romanists are reduced to this miserable necessity; either to make use of no Bible at all; or to fall under the curse of Sixtus, if he make use of that of Clement; or the curse of Clement, if he use the Bible of Sixtus. For they are both of them enjoined, with the exclusion of all other editions; and with the penalty of a curse upon them who disobey the one or the other; and it is impossible to obey both.

This might be sufficient to demonstrate, how unfaithful that church hath been in the weightiest concerns. Whereby all the members of it are plunged, beyond all power of redemption, into a dismal necessity, either of laying aside the scriptures, or of offending against the sacred decrees (as they account them) of one or other of the heads of their church, (which some take to be infallible,) and being accursed of them.

2. But for every one's fuller satisfaction, it may be fit further to represent, how negligent they have been in preserving other traditions, which were certainly once in the church, but now utterly lost. There is no question to be made, but the apostles taught the first Christians the meaning of those hard places which we find in their and other holy writings: but who can tell us where to find certainly so much as one of them? And therefore, where is the fidelity of this church, which boasts so much to be the keeper of sacred traditions? For nothing is more desirable than those apostolical interpretations of scripture; nothing could be more useful; and yet we have no hope to meet with them either there, or indeed any where else. Which is no reproach to other churches, who do not pretend to more than is written; but reflects much upon them, and discredits them, who challenge the power of the whole church entirely, and would pass not only for the sole keepers

and witnesses of Divine truth, but for careful preservers of it. For of what should they have been more careful than of these useful things; whereof they can tell us nothing? When of unprofitable ceremonies they have most devoutly kept, if we could believe them, a very great number.

3. They tell us indeed of some doctrinal traditions also, which they have religiously preserved; but mark, I beseech you, with what sincerity. For to justify these, they have forged great numbers of writings, and books under the name of such authors, as it is evident, had no hand in them; which is another reason why we cannot give credit to their reports, if we have no other authority. There are very few persons now that are ignorant how many decretal epistles of the ancient bishops of Rome have been devised, to establish the papal empire; and how shamefully a donation of Constantine hath been pretended, wherein he gave away the Roman empire and all its rights to the pope. Which puts me in mind (as a notorious proof of this) of the forgeries that are in the Breviary itself: where we read of Constantine's leprosy, and the cure of it by Sylvester's baptizing him, (which are egregious fables,) and of the decrees of the second Roman synod under that pope Sylvester; wherein the Breviary affirms Photinus was condemned; when all the world knows, that Photinus his heresy did not spring up till divers years after the death of Sylvester. And there are so many other arguments which prove the decrees of that synod to be a vile forgery, that we may see, by the way, what reason they have to keep their liturgy in an unknown language; lest the people, perceiving what untruths they are taught instead of God's word, should abhor that Divine service, as justly they might, which is stuffed with so many fables.

It would be endless to shew how many passages they have foisted into ancient writers to countenance their traditions, particularly about the papal supremacy; by which so great a man as Thomas Aquinas was deceived, who frequently quotes authorities which are mere forgeries; though not invented by him, I verily think, but imposed upon him by the fraud which had been long practised in that church. For we find, that the canons of so famous and universally known council as that of the first at Nice, have been falsely alleged even by

popes themselves. Boniface, for instance, and Zosimus, alleged a counterfeit Nicene canon to the African bishops in the sixth council of Carthage; who, to convince the false dealing of these popes, sought out with great labour and diligence the ancient and authentic copies of the Nicene canons; and having obtained them both from Alexandria and from Constantinople, they found them for number and for sense to be the very same which themselves already had; but not one word in them of what the popes pretended. The same I might say of pope Innocent, and others; whom I purposely omit, because I study brevity,

4. And have this further to add; that as they have pretended tradition where there is none, so where there is, they have left that tradition; and therefore have no reason to expect that we should be governed by them in this matter; who take the liberty to neglect, as they please, better tradition than they would impose upon us. None are to be charged with this, if it be a guilt, more than themselves. For instance, the three immersions, i. e. dipping the persons three times in baptism, was certainly an ancient practice, and said by many authors to be an apostolical tradition; and to be ordained in signification of the blessed Trinity, into whose name they were baptized. And yet there is no such thing now in use, in their church, no more than in ours; who justify ourselves, as I shewed above, by a true opinion, that rites and ceremonies are not unalterable; which it is impossible for them to do, unless they will cease to press the necessity of other traditions upon us, which never were so generally received as this which is now abolished. To which may be added, the custom of giving the eucharist to infants, which prevailed for several ages, and is called by St. Austin an *apostolical tradition*; the custom of administering baptism only at Easter and Whitsuntide; with a great heap more, which it would be too long to enumerate. Nor is it necessary I should trouble the reader with them, these being sufficient to shew the partiality of that church in this matter; and that we have no reason to be tied to that, merely upon their authority; which they will not observe, though having a far greater. Nay, all discreet persons may easily see what a wide difference there is between them who have abrogated such traditions, as had long gone even in their

church under the name of apostolical, and us, who therefore do not follow pretended traditions now, because we believe them not to be apostolical, but merely Roman. He is strangely blind, who doth not see how much more sincere this church is than that, in this regard.

5. Besides this, we can demonstrate, that as in these things they have forsaken traditions, so in other cases they have perverted and abused them; turning them into quite another thing: as appears to all that understand any thing of ancient learning, in the business of purgatory; which none of the most ancient writers so much as dreamt to be such a place as they have now devised, but only asserted a purgatory fire; through which all, both good and bad, even the blessed Virgin herself, must pass, at the great and dreadful day of judgment. This was the old tradition, as we may call it, which was among Christians; which they have changed into such a tradition as was among the pagans.

6. But it is time to have done with this; else I should have insisted upon this a while, which I touched before, and is of great moment; That the tradition which now runs in that church is contrary to the certain tradition of the apostles and the universal church, particularly in the canon of scripture: in which no more books have been numbered by the catholic church in all ages, since the apostles' time, than are in the sixth article of religion in this church of England; till the late council of Trent took the boldness to thrust the apocryphal books into the holy canon, as nothing inferior to the acknowledged Divine writings. This hath been so evidently demonstrated by a late reverend prelate of our church, in his Scholastical History of the Canon of the Scriptures, out of undoubted records, that no fair answer can be made to it.

But I must leave a little room for other things that ought to be noted.

III. And the next is a consequence from what hath been now said; That there being so little credit to be given to the Roman church only, we cannot receive those doctrines for truth, which that church now presses upon our belief, upon the account of tradition. For instance, that "the church of Rome is the mother and mistress of all other churches; that the pope of Rome is the monarch or head of the universal

visible church; that all scriptures must be expounded according to the sense of this church; that there are truly and properly seven sacraments, neither more nor less, instituted by our blessed Lord himself in the New Testament; that there is a proper and propitiatory sacrifice offered in the mass for the quick and dead, the same that Christ offered on the cross;" in short, the half communion, and all the rest of the articles of their new faith, in the creed published by pope Pius IV, which are traditions of the Roman church alone, not of the universal, and rely solely upon their own authority. And therefore we refuse them, and in our disputes about traditions we mean these things; which we reject, because they have no foundation either in the holy scripture, or in universal tradition; but depend, as I said, upon the sole authority of that church, which witnesses in its own behalf.

For whatsoever is pretended, to make the better show, all resolves at last into that, as I intimated in the beginning of this discourse. Scripture and tradition can do nothing at all for them, without their church's definition. Though their whole infallible rule of faith seem to be made up of those three, yet in truth, the last of these alone, the church's definition, is the whole rule, and the very bottom upon which their faith stands. For what is tradition, is no more apparent than what is scripture, according to their principles, without the authority of their church; which pretends to an unlimited power to supply the defect even of tradition itself.

In short, as tradition among them is taken in to supply the defect of scripture, so the authority of their church is taken in to supply the defect of tradition; but this authority undermines them both; because neither scripture nor tradition signify any thing without their church's authority. Which therefore is the rule of their faith; that is, they believe themselves.

To which absurdity they are driven, because it is made evident by us that there have been great diversities of traditions, and many changes and alterations made, even in things called apostolical, &c. and therefore they have no other way, but to fly to the judgment of the present Roman church, to determine what are traditions apostolical, and what are not; by which judgment all mankind must be governed; that is,

we must believe them, and they believe themselves; which they would have done well to have said in one word, without putting us to the trouble of seeking for traditions in books, and in other churches. But they would willingly colour their pretences by as many fair words as is possible, and so make mention of scripture, tradition, antiquity; which when we have examined, they will not stand to them, but take sanctuary in their own authority; saying, they are the sole judges what is scripture, and what tradition, and what antiquity; nay, have a power to declare any new point of faith which the church never heard of before. This is the doctrine of Salmeron and others of his fellows; That the doctrine of faith admits of additions in essential things. For all things were not taught by the apostles, but such as were then necessary and fit for the salvation of believers.

By which means we can never know when the Christian religion will be perfected: but their church may bring in traditions, by its sole authority, without end.

Nay, some among them have been contented to resolve all their faith into the sole authority of the present Roman bishop; according to that famous saying of Cornelius Mussus, (promoted by Paul III. to a bishopric,) upon the fourteenth chapter to the Romans; "To confess the truth ingenuously, I would give greater credit to one pope, in those things which touch the mysteries of faith, than to a thousand Hieroms, Austins, Gregories: to say nothing of Richards, Scotuses, &c.; for I believe and know, that the pope cannot err in matters of faith." Which contemptuous speech he would never have uttered, to the discredit of those great men whom they pretend to reverence, if he had not known more certainly, that the tradition which runs among the ancient Fathers is against them, than he could know the pope to be infallible.

There is no tradition, I am sure, for that; nor for abundance of other things, which rest merely upon their own credit, as is fairly acknowledged in two great articles of their present creed, by our countryman bishop Fisher, with whose words I conclude this particular. "Many, perhaps, have the less confidence in indulgences, because their use seems to have been newer in the church, and very lately found among Christians." To whom I answer, that it doth not appear cer-

tainly by whom they began to be first delivered. For the ancients make no mention, or very rare, of purgatory; and the Greeks to this very day do not believe it; nor was the belief either of purgatory or of indulgences so necessary in the primitive church as it is now. And as long as there was no care about purgatory, nobody sought for indulgences; for all their esteem depends upon that. If you take away purgatory, to what purpose are indulgences? Since therefore purgatory was so lately known and received in the catholic church, who can wonder that there was no use of indulgences in the beginning of our religion?

Which is a full confession what kind of traditions that church commends unto us; things lately invented, their own private opinions, of which the ancient Christians knew nothing. In one word, their tradition is no tradition, in that sense wherein the church always understood it.

IV. And what hath been said of them must be applied to other particular churches; though some have been more sincere than they. None of them hath any authority to commend any thing as an article of faith unto posterity, which hath not been commended to them by all foregoing ages, derived from the apostles. For Vincentius his rule is to guide us all in this; "That is catholic (and consequently to be received) which hath been held by all, and in all churches, and at all times."

V. Which puts me in mind of another thing to be briefly touched; That the ecclesiastical tradition contained in the confessions or registers of particular churches, in these days wherein we live, is not received by us, nor allowed to have the same authority which such tradition had at the time of the Nicene council, for the conviction of heresy. The joint consent, I mean, of so many bishops as were there assembled, and the unanimous confessions of so many several churches of several provinces as were there delivered, hath not now such a force to induce belief as it had then. The reason of which is given by the same Vincentius, who so highly commends that way which was then taken of reproving heresy; but adds this most wise caution, (in the last chapter but one of the first part of his *Commonitorium*,) "But you must not think that all heresies, and always, are thus to be opposed; but only

new and fresh heresies; when they first rise up, that is, before they have falsified the rules of the ancient faith, &c. As for inveterate heresies, which have spread themselves, they are in nowise to be assaulted this way; because in a long tract of time, many opportunities may have presented themselves to heretics, of stealing truth out of ancient records, and of corrupting the volumes of our ancestors."

Which if it be applied to the present state of things, it is evident the Roman church hath had such opportunities of falsifying antiquity ever since the first acknowledgment of the papal supremacy, that we cannot rely merely upon any written testimonies, or unwritten traditions, which never so great a number of their bishops met together shall produce: which amount not to so much as one legal testimony; but they are to be looked upon, or suspected, as a multitude of false witnesses, conspiring together in their own cause.

How then, may some say, can heresies of long standing be confuted? The same Vincentius resolves us in this, in the very next words; "We may convince them, if need be, by the sole authority of the scriptures; or eschew them as already convicted and condemned in ancient times, by the general councils of catholic priests."

The tradition which is found there must direct all future councils, not the opinions of their own present churches.

VI. I will add but one thing more; which is, that the tradition called *oral*, because it comes by word of mouth from one age to another, without any written record, is the most uncertain, and can be least relied upon of all other. This hath been demonstrated so fully by the writers of our church, and there are such pregnant instances of the errors into which men have been led by it, that it needs no long discourse.

Two instances of it are very common, and I shall add a third.

1. The first is that which Papias, who lived presently after the apostles' times, and conversed with those who had seen them, set on foot. His way was, as Eusebius relates out of his works, not so much to read, as to inquire of the elders, what St. Andrew or St. Peter said; what was the saying of St. Thomas, St. James, and the rest of the disciples of our Lord. And he pretended that some of them told him, among other things, that after the resurrection of our bodies, we shall

reign a thousand years here upon earth; which he gathered, saith Eusebius, from some saying of the apostles wrong understood. But this fancy was embraced very greedily, and was taught for two whole ages as an apostolical tradition; nobody opposing it, and yet having nothing to say for it, but only "the antiquity of the man" (as Eusebius his words are, lib. iii. cap. ult.) who delivered it to them: yet this tradition hath been generally since taken for an imposture, and teaches us no more than this, that if one man could set a-going such a doctrine, and make it pass so current for so long a time, upon no other pretence, than that an apostle said so in private discourse; we have great reason to think that other traditions have had no better beginning, or not so good; especially since they never so universally prevailed as that did.

2. A second instance is that famous contention about the observation of Easter, which miserably afflicted the church in the days of Victor bishop of Rome, by dividing the eastern Christians from the western. One pretending tradition from St. John and St. Philip, the other from St. Peter and St. Paul. Concerning which I will not say, as Rigaltius doth, (in his sharp note upon the words of Firmilian, who pretended tradition for the rebaptizing of heretics,) that "under the names and persons of great men, there were sottish and sophistical things delivered for apostolical traditions, by fools and sophisters." But this I affirm, that there are many more instances of men's forwardness, and they neither fools nor sophisters, but only wedded to the opinions of their own churches, to obtrude things as apostolical, for which they had no proof at all. For when they knew not how to defend themselves, presently they flew to tradition apostolical.

3. A third instance of whose uncertainty we have in Irenæus (lib. ii. c. 39.) concerning the age of our blessed Saviour when he died; which he confidently affirms to have been forty, if not fifty years; and saith, the elders which knew St. John, and were his scholars, received this relation from him. And yet all agree, that he, beginning to preach at thirty years of age, was crucified about three years and a half after.

The like relation Clemens makes, of his preaching but one

year; which he calls a secret tradition from the apostles, but hath no more truth in it than the other.

Now if in the first ages, when they were so near the fountain and beginning of tradition, men were deceived, nay, such great men as these were deceived, and led others into errors in these matters; we cannot with any safety trust to traditions that have passed, men pretend, from one to another until now; but which we can find no mention of in any writer, till some ages after the apostles; and then were by somebody or other, who had authority in those days, called *apostolical traditions*, merely to gain them the more credit. Thus Andreas Cæsariensis, in his Commentaries upon the Book of Revelation, p. 743, saith, "that the coming of Enoch and Elias, before the second coming of Christ," (though it be not found in scripture,) "was a constant report received by tradition without any variation from the teachers of the church.

Which is sufficient to shew how ready they were to father their own private opinions upon ancient universal tradition; and how little reason we have to trust to that which was so uncertain, even in the first ages, and therefore must needs be more dubious now.

Thus I have endeavoured to lay before the eyes of those who will be pleased to look over this short treatise, what they are to think and speak about tradition. It is a calumny to affirm, that the church of England rejects all tradition: and I hope none of her true children are so ignorant, as when they hear that word, to imagine they must rise up and oppose it. No, the scripture itself is a tradition; and we admit all other traditions which are subordinate, and agreeable unto that, together with all those things which can be proved to be apostolical, by the general testimony of the church in all ages: nay, if any thing not contained in scripture, which the Roman church now pretends to be a part of God's word, were delivered to us, by as universal uncontrolled tradition as the scripture is, we should receive it as we do the scripture.

But it appears plainly, that such things were at first but private opinions, which now are become the doctrines of that particular church, who would impose her decrees upon us under the venerable name of apostolical universal tradition;

which I have shewn you hath been an ancient cheat, and that we ought not to be so easy as to be deceived by it; but to be very wary, and afraid of trusting the traditions of such a church, as hath not only perverted some, abolished others, and pretended them where there hath been none, but been a very unfaithful preserver of them, and that in matters of great moment, where there were some; and lastly, warrants those which it pretends to have kept, by nothing but its own infallibility. For which there is no tradition, but much against it, even in the original tradition, the holy scriptures; which plainly suppose the Roman church may not only err, but utterly fail and be cut off from the body of Christ; as they that please may read, who will consult the eleventh chapter to the Romans, ver. 20—22; of which they are in the greater danger, because they proudly claim so high a prerogative as that now mentioned, directly contrary to the apostolical admonition in that place, *Be not highminded, but fear.*

CONCLUSION.

I shall end this discourse with a brief admonition, relating to our Christian practice.

And what is there more proper or more seasonable than this? While we reject all spurious traditions, let us be sure to keep close to the genuine and true. Let us hold them fast, and not let them go.

Let us not dispute ourselves out of all religion, while we condemn that which is false; nor break all Christian discipline and order, because we cannot submit to all human impositions.

In plain words, let us not throw off episcopacy, together with the papal tyranny.

We ought to be the more careful in observing the Divine tradition delivered to us in the scripture, and according to the scripture; because we are not bound to other.

While we contend against the half-communion, let us make a conscience to receive the whole frequently. It looks like faction, rather than religion, to be earnest for that which we mean not to use.

In like manner, while we look upon additions to the scrip-

ture as vain, let us not neglect to read and ponder those holy writings.

When we reject purgatory as a fable, let us really dread hell fire.

And while we do not tie ourselves to all usages that have been in the church, let us be careful to observe, first, all the substantial duties of righteousness, charity, sobriety, and godliness, which are unquestionably delivered to us by our Lord himself and his holy apostles: and secondly, all the ordinances of the church wherein we live, which are not contrary to the word of God. For so hath the same Divine authority delivered; that the people should obey those that are their guides and governors, submitting themselves to their authority, and avoiding all contention with them, as most undecent in itself, and pernicious to religion; which suffers extremely, when neither ecclesiastical authority nor ecclesiastical custom can end disputes about rites and ceremonies.

Read 1 Thess. v. 12; Heb. xiii. 17; 1 Cor. xi. 16; and read such places, as you ought to do all the other scriptures, till your hearts be deeply affected with them.

For be admonished, in the last place, of this; which is of general use, and must never be forgotten; because we shall lose the benefit of that celestial doctrine which is delivered unto us, if we do not strictly observe it: that "as this evangelical doctrine is delivered down to us, so we must be delivered up to it." Thus St. Paul teaches us to speak in Rom. vi. 17. where he thanks God that they who formerly had been servants of sin, did now *obey from the heart that form of doctrine, unto which they were delivered.* So the words run in the Greek, (as the margin of our Bibles informs you,) εἰς ὃν παρεδόθητε.

This is the tradition which we must be sure to retain, and hold fast above all other; as that without which all our belief will be ineffectual.

This is the very end for which all Divine truth is delivered unto us, that we may be delivered, and make a surrender of ourselves unto it.

Observe the force of the apostle's words; which tell us, first, that there was a certain form of Christian doctrine which the apostles taught, compared here to a mould (so the word τύπος,

form, may be translated) into which metal, or such like matter is cast; that it may receive the figure and shape of that mould.

2. Now he compares the Roman Christians to such ductile, pliable matter; they being so delivered or cast into this form or mould of Christian doctrine, that they were entirely framed and fashioned according to it; and had all the lineaments, as I may say, of it expressed upon their souls.

3. And having so received it, they were obedient to it; for without this, all the impressions, which by knowledge or faith were made upon their souls, were but an imperfect draught of what was intended in the Christian tradition.

4. And it was hearty obedience, sincere compliance with the Divine will; such obedience as became those who understood their religion to be a great deliverance and liberty from the slavery of sin, (before spoken of,) into the happy freedom of the service of God.

5. All which, lastly, he ascribes to the grace of God, which had both delivered to them that doctrine, and drawn them to deliver up themselves to it; made their hearts soft and ductile to be cast into that mould, and quickened them to Christian obedience; and given them a willing mind to obey cheerfully. All this was from God's grace, and not their merits; and therefore the thanks was to be ascribed to him, who succeeds and blesses all pious endeavours.

Now according to this pattern let us frame ourselves; who, blessed be God, have a form of doctrine delivered to us in this church, exactly agreeable to the holy scriptures, which lie open before us; and we are exhorted not only to look into them, but we feel that grace which hath brought them to us, clearly demonstrating, that we ought to be formed according to the holy doctrine therein delivered, by the delivery of ourselves unto it: by the delivery of our mind, that is, to think of God, and ourselves, and of our duty in every point, just as this instructs us; and by the delivery of our wills and affections, to be governed and regulated according to its directions. And when we have consented to this, we find the Divine grace representing to us the necessity of an hearty obedience to what we know and believe, and have embraced as the very truth of God. To this we are continually drawn and mightily

moved; and if we would shew our thankfulness for it, let us follow these godly motions, and conform ourselves in all things to the heavenly prescriptions of this book; being confident that if we do, we need not trouble ourselves about any other model of religion, which we find not here delivered.

For if you desire to know what form of doctrine it is, to which the apostle would have us delivered; it is certain it is a doctrine directly opposite to all vice and wickedness. For herein the grace of God was manifested, he tells the Romans, in that it had brought them from being slaves of sin, heartily to obey the Christian doctrine; which taught, that is, virtue and piety.

Now to this the present Romanists can pretend to add nothing. All the parts of a godly life are sufficiently taught us in the holy scriptures. And if we would seriously practise and follow this doctrine, from the very heart, we should easily see there is no other but what is there delivered. For whatsoever is pretended to be necessary besides, is not a *doctrine according unto godliness*, (as the apostle calls Christianity,) but the very design of it is to open an easier way to heaven, than that laid before us in the holy scriptures; by masses for the dead, by indulgences, by satisfactions, and the merits of the saints, and several other such like inventions; which have no foundation in the scriptures, nor in true antiquity.

That is a word indeed, which is very much pretended. Antiquity, they say, is on their side; but it is nothing different from what hath been said about tradition. And if we will run up to the true antiquity, there is nothing so ancient as the holy scriptures. They are the oldest records of religion; and by them if we frame our lives, we are sure it is according to the most authentic and ancient directions of piety, delivered in the holy oracles of God. So both sides confess them to be. And if the old rule be safe, "That is true which is first," we are safe enough; for there is nothing before this to be our guide; and there can be nothing after this but must be tried by it. According to another rule, as old as reason itself, "The first in every kind is the measure of all the rest." And, as sure as that there is a gospel of God's grace, they that walk after this rule, (this Divine canon,) peace shall be upon them, and mercy; they being the true Israel, or church of God.

THE TEXTS EXAMINED

WHICH

PAPISTS CITE OUT OF THE BIBLE,

FOR THE PROOF OF THEIR DOCTRINE

OF

THE SACRIFICE OF THE MASS.

IN TWO PARTS.

PART I.

IT is my intention, in the following discourse, to consider those passages of the holy scripture which are by the writers of the church of Rome produced in defence of the doctrine of that church, concerning the sacrifice of the mass. And before I proceed to that, it will be fit that I should state the question between that church and ours, and briefly shew what the church of Rome holds, what we allow, and for what reason we reject the doctrine of the church of Rome in that matter.

By the *mass* in this question, Bellarmine [a] owns, is meant the whole celebration of the Divine service in which the eucharist was consecrated.

By *sacrifice* is meant a proper one, and such as is propitiatory; "not a sacrifice in general," says a late author of the church of Rome [b], "or improperly so termed, (such as are all the actions of the mind, or any work of virtue whatsoever,) but a special sacrifice truly and properly so called." The same author adds presently afterwards, our tenet is, "that the oblation of our Lord's last supper, or the mass, is a true and proper unbloody sacrifice, and propitiatory for sins."

The council of Trent [c] defines it to be "a true and proper

a Bellarm. de Missa, l. 1. c. 1.
b Manual of Controversies, by H. T. Printed at Doway, 1654. c Sess. 22.

sacrifice and propitiatory; and that it is not only profitable to him who receives it, but to be offered up for the living and the dead: and that in this sacrifice of the mass, the "very same Christ is contained, and unbloodily sacrificed, who once on the altar of the cross offered himself bloodily."

The Trent Catechism[d] tells us, that the sacrifice of the mass is not only a sacrifice of praise, or bare commemoration of the sacrifice of the cross, but "truly a propitiatory sacrifice by which God is appeased, and rendered propitious to us." And a little before[e], speaking of the causes for which the eucharist was instituted by Christ, this is assigned as one, viz. "that the church might have a perpetual sacrifice, by which our sins might be expiated, and our heavenly Father being often greatly offended with our sins, might be brought from anger to mercy, and from the severity of a just punishment to clemency." The same author tells us a little before, that if the sacrifices of the old law were pleasing to God, "what may be hoped from that sacrifice (viz. of the mass) in which he himself is sacrificed and offered up, of whom was twice heard the voice from heaven, *This is my beloved Son*," &c.

That author, in another place[f], in answer to the question, "Whether the sacrifice of the mass be the same sacrifice with that of the cross?" replies thus, "We confess it," says he, "to be one and the same sacrifice, and so to be accounted," &c.

Upon the whole, the church of Rome in this matter affirms these three things:

First, "That the sacrifice of the last supper, or (as they commonly express it) the sacrifice of the mass, is a true and proper sacrifice."

Secondly, "That the victim which is sacrificed in this sacrifice of the last supper, or mass, is the very body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ." For they affirm this to be the same sacrifice with that of the cross.

Thirdly, "That this sacrifice of the mass is propitiatory and expiatory; that it procures pardon for the sins of the living and dead, as well as obtains grace to help in the time of need."

[d] Catechism. Roman. p. 206. edit. Antwerp. 1583. [e] Page 203.
[f] Page 105.

This is a sincere and true representation of the doctrine of the church of Rome in this matter.

And here I cannot but take notice of the insincere practice of a late writer[g], who pretends to give us a true representation of the doctrines of the church of Rome. He, in his discourse of the mass, craftily baulks what the church of Rome teacheth in this matter, viz. that it is a proper and propitiatory sacrifice for the living and dead; which is the main point contested between us. And instead of that, tells us, "that it is a commemorative sacrifice, lively representing in an unbloody manner the bloody sacrifice which was offered for us upon the cross;" and that Christ gave in command to his apostles to do the same thing he had done at his last supper, "in commemoration of him." He says not one word of its being a propitiatory sacrifice for the living and the dead. He calls it a *commemorative one;* which, taking in the whole action, we do not deny: and when he affirms that Christ bid his apostles to do what he did in commemoration of him, we say so too. But this author could not but know, that in the third canon of the council of Trent concerning this matter, an anathema is denounced against those who affirm the sacrifice of the mass to be a bare commemoration of the sacrifice of the cross.

We of this church of England do readily grant and allow,

That the eucharist may be called a sacrifice; as a sacrament hath the name of that which it does commemorate and represent.

That as in this sacrament we commemorate the sacrifice of Christ on the cross, so we do in it represent to God the Father what Christ suffered for us, that he may graciously incline to bestow on us the blessings which Christ hath purchased with his blood.

That we do, when we communicate, make an oblation of ourselves. Thus in the prayer after the communion we read, "Here we offer and present unto thee, O Lord, ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice unto thee."

That the eucharist may be called a sacrifice of praise. We do therein offer our praises and thanksgivings to God, and as a testimony of the sense we have of the Divine mercies, we

[g] A Papist misrepresented and represented, by J. L. p. 52. &c.

offer our alms, which is not only a sacrifice, but such an one as with which God is well pleased.

What our church holds, is best learned from her declaration in her Articles, in the following words[h]: "The offering of Christ once made is that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction, for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual; and there is none other satisfaction for sin, but that alone." And in the next words, she declares against the "sacrifices of masses, in which it was commonly said, that the priest did offer Christ for the quick and the dead, to have remission of pain or guilt." Whence it is evident, that she rejects the doctrine of the Trent council, that the sacrifice of the mass is a true and proper sacrifice propitiatory for the quick and dead.

This we deny; and think we have just reason so to do. And that no such doctrine is revealed in the holy scripture, as will appear afterwards, is reason enough for the rejecting it. Such a doctrine as this had need be clearly proved by some express testimony, or just consequence. This is needful according to one of their own writers[i].

But though this be reason enough, yet this is not all. The doctrine itself is perplexed and inconsistent, and by no means allowable. And for this I appeal to the conscience of any indifferent man, that will but suffer himself to weigh and consider things. I would fain know, how that can be said to be an unbloody sacrifice by them, who hold that the natural blood of Christ is there? How can that be called a commemoration of the sacrifice of the cross, which is affirmed to be one and the very same sacrifice with it? How can the sacrifice of the mass be the same with that of the cross, when Christ's natural death is of the essence of the sacrifice of the cross; but that of the mass does not comprehend his death; and we are told, Rom. vi. 9, *that Christ dieth no more?* How can that be said to be a true and proper sacrifice, where the essentials of such a sacrifice, even according to our adversaries, are wanting? Here is nothing visible or sensible, which yet is that which Bellarmine[k] requires in his definition of a true and

[h] Article XXXI.

[i] Quæ enim ad fidem et dogmata constituenda pertinent, ea clarissime oportet ex Scripturis S. colligi. Richerii Apolog. pro Gersonio.

[k] Bellarm. de Missa, l. 1. c. 2.

proper sacrifice. It is easy to affirm indeed, that the body of Christ is in the sacrifice of the mass, under the species of bread; but as this can never be proved, so it is impertinent to allege it in this place. For where is that which is visible or sensible, which Bellarmine requires the victim should be in a proper sacrifice? The species of bread is so far from rendering the body of Christ visible or sensible, that it hides it from our eyes. And though a substance may be known by its own accidents, yet it cannot be known by the accidents of another substance. Who can tell the difference, that looks on them only, between a consecrated and unconsecrated wafer? Again, in this sacrifice of the mass, here is no destruction, no sensible transmutation of what is sacrificed, which Bellarmine makes necessary in a true and proper sacrifice: here is no destruction of any thing that can be perceived: no shedding of blood, (for it is an unbloody sacrifice,) without which there is no remission. The natural body of Christ receives no change, his natural being is not destroyed or damaged. If they say, "that it is his sacramental being that receives the change," they must mean either an accidental being, (as present in the sacrament,) or substantial. The latter they cannot mean, unless they allow of the destruction or transmutation of his natural being, which they will not allow. If the former, then the sacrifice of the mass is a sacrifice of accidents only, and not of Christ; and then this sacrifice of the mass is not the same with that of the cross. And it is very strange that should be a true and proper sacrifice [1], in which death only intervenes by representation; and that it should be the very same with that of the cross, when we are told, that it is "instituted only to represent it;" as if there were no difference between a memorial and representation, and the thing to which this does refer. In other proper sacrifices, the altar sanctified the victim, and was reputed of greater value, and the offerer was of greater price than what was offered: this will not be allowed in the present case, and yet we must be obliged to believe it to be a proper sacrifice. We cannot understand how the sacrifice of the mass should be the very same with that of the cross, when one is but the memorial of the other, and is acknowledged to receive all its virtue from it. It cannot be that they should be

[1] Bishop of Condom's Exposition, S. 14.

the same, either in number or in kind. The first is so absurd, that no man can affirm it; nor can any man believe the second, that considers the wide difference between the one and the other, viz. "between the sacrifice of the cross, and that of the mass." The first was offered by Christ, and was a bloody sacrifice; it was offered on the cross, and is the full price of our redemption: Christ was the victim, and was offered there in his natural substance; he was visible there, and there he died. But this sacrifice of the mass is offered by priests, is an unbloody sacrifice, is placed on altars erected for that purpose, and is not so much as pretended to be the price of our redemption. We see nothing but bread and wine, we taste and handle nothing else; and it is confessed that Christ dies no more, and yet we are obliged to believe that both these are one and the very same.

Our church hath further reason still to reject this doctrine of the sacrifice of the mass, because it is contrary to the doctrine of the holy scriptures. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews had the fairest occasion to acquaint us with this Romish doctrine of the sacrifice of the mass, had there been any such thing: for he discourseth at large of the priesthood according to the order of Melchizedek and of Aaron; of the insufficiency of the Jewish sacrifices, and of the sufficiency of the sacrifice of the cross; and yet he is so far from once mentioning the sacrifice of the mass, that he says many things which overthrow it.

He tells us, Heb. ix. 12, *Christ by his own blood entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.* If he obtained eternal redemption, he need not be offered daily to procure our pardon. There was no need he should offer himself more than once. The same Divine author tells us so: *Nor yet*, says he, ver. 25, 26, *that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others: for then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.* The repetition of the legal sacrifices spake their insufficiency: our Saviour *by one offering hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified*, Heb. x. 14. This speaks the sufficiency of the sacrifice of the cross. Two things

we learn from the reasoning of this Divine author, which overthrow the sacrifice of the mass.

First, that Christ cannot be offered without suffering; and therefore if he be offered in the mass, he must suffer there: he must either suffer in the mass, or not be offered there. For if he should *offer himself often*, says this Divine author, *then must he often have suffered.* And if the sacrifice of the mass be a sacrifice properly so called, and propitiatory, the oblation of Christ in it must infer his suffering.

Secondly, that the same consideration is to be had of the time from the beginning of the world to the death of Christ, as of the time from his death to the end of it. If he must be often offered after his death upon the cross to the end of the world, he must for the same reason have been often offered from the beginning of the world to his death; but there was no need he should have been often offered before his death, and therefore no need of it afterwards, neither to procure our redemption, nor yet to apply it. If he saved them who went before by this one offering, why not them that are to come? *He was once offered to bear the sins of many*, Heb. ix. 28. and but once, as appears from what goes before: *as it is appointed to men once to die*, &c. *so Christ was once offered*, &c. The same Divine author tells, *that Christ offered one sacrifice for sins*, and that *by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified*, and that *there is no more offering for sin*, Heb. x. 12, 14, 18.

I proceed next to consider the scriptures produced by those of the church of Rome in defence of the sacrifice of the mass.

The first place of scripture which I shall consider, is what we read of Melchizedek, who is said to have *brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God. And he blessed him*, i. e. *Abram*, &c. Gen. xiv. 18, 19. This place of scripture is commonly urged by the church of Rome, as an argument to prove their doctrine of the sacrifice of the mass. And Bellarmine [m] takes great pains to prove it from thence. And indeed it requires great labour to form any show of an argument for the sacrifice of the mass from these words.

[m] De Missa, l. 1. c. 6.

However, I shall follow the cardinal, and consider his reasoning from these words.

That the Psalmist, Psalm cx. 4, and the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, Heb. vii. affirm Christ to be *a priest after the order of Melchizedek*, we grant; and that he was not a priest after the order of Aaron.

The cardinal proceeds, and tells us, there were two differences between these two priesthoods, from whence he thinks two arguments may be drawn for the support of his cause. The first and chief difference he reckons, is the external form of the sacrifices. The Aaronical were bloody, that of Melchizedek unbloody, and figured, under the species of bread and wine, the body and blood of Christ. Hence the cardinal concludes, that if Christ be a priest after the order of Melchizedek, and not of Aaron, he must institute an unbloody sacrifice, and that under the species of bread and wine. This he thinks follows necessarily from the force of the type and figure. Melchizedek offered bread and wine, and truly sacrificed; therefore Christ, in the institution of the eucharist, did truly sacrifice, otherwise he had not fulfilled the type.

The second difference between the priesthood of Melchizedek and Aaron, the cardinal says, is this, that the first was that of one man, who had neither predecessor nor successor, of which order Christ was, who lives for ever; but that of Aaron was of many men, succeeding each other because of death. If Christ then be a priest for ever, the rite of sacrificing must continue; and therefore there must be another sacrifice besides that of the cross once offered, which must be continually offered. For he cannot be said to be a priest who hath no sacrifice which he may offer. But there can be no such, if we destroy the sacrifice of the mass.

That I may give a clear answer to these pretences, for I cannot call them arguments, I shall proceed in the method of a learned protestant writer [n] on this argument.

I. I shall shew that we have no sufficient ground to believe that Melchizedek did offer an unbloody sacrifice of bread and wine.

II. That if he had offered such a sacrifice, it will not thence follow that the priesthood of Melchizedek con-

[n] De la Place Examen des Preuves du Sacrifice du la Messe, p. 26.

sisted in this, and that this distinguished it from that of Aaron.

III. That granting that Melchizedek did offer such a sacrifice, and that thereby his priesthood was different from that of Aaron, it does not thence follow that Christ ought to institute in his church an unbloody sacrifice under the species of bread and wine.

I. We have no sufficient ground to believe that Melchizedek did offer an unbloody sacrifice of bread and wine.

The text alleged gives no manner of ground for this opinion; there is not in it the least syllable to this purpose: *Melchizedek brought forth bread and wine.* It is not said, *he offered*, much less that *he offered to God*, which he must have done, had he offered a sacrifice. He brought forth this as a refreshment to Abram and his company. This is all that the text imports. There is nothing in the Hebrew, or LXXII. interpreters, in the Targum of Onkelos, in the Syriac version, nor the ancient Latin version, which favours this opinion of the Roman church. Josephus[o], relating this matter, tells us expressly, that Melchizedek entertained Abram's army, and afforded them plenty of necessary provisions[p]: but he says nothing of his sacrificing bread and wine. And Philo[q] the Jew reckons this action of Melchizedek as an instance of his hospitality, and opposeth it to the churlishness of the Moabites and Ammonites, who refused to give refreshment to the Israelites in their passage to the promised land. The case is so plain, that several of the Roman church do not think these words to import any sacrifice. Cardinal Cajetan[r] upon the words affirms, that "there is nothing written of sacrifice or oblation, but only of bringing forth, which," says he, "Josephus affirms to have been done for the refreshment of the conquerors." Another of their own church[s] gives this account of it: *Melchizedek actis Deo ob victoriam gratiis, ac fausta omnia Abramo precatus, ipsum ejusque exercitum cibo potuque refocillavit.* So that all that he affirms is, that Melchizedek refreshed Abram and his followers with meat and drink,

[o] Josephus Ant. l. i. c. 11.

[p] Ξένια καὶ πολλὴν ἀφθονίαν τῶν ἐπιτηδείων, &c.

[q] Philo Judæus Leg. Allegor. l. 2.

[r] Nihil scribitur hic de sacrificio, &c. Cajetan in Gen. xiv. 18.

[s] Cassander de Viris Illustribus. De Abrahamo.

having given God thanks for the victory, and wished all happiness to Abram.

But Bellarmine pretends that the Hebrew word, הוציא, which we render *brought forth*, according to the exigence of the place, is often used for the bringing forth of a sacrifice to be slain: and as a proof of this, he allegeth a passage from Judges, chap. vi. 18, which I find alleged by others of that church [t], as referring to a sacrifice. The notes upon the Doway Bible [u] go further, and say, that this Hebrew word is a word pertaining to sacrifice, as in Judges, chap. vi. 18, 19.

Now though it be nothing to the purpose, if this word should be applicable to a sacrifice as well as to any other thing, which may be said to be *brought forth*, yet I shall consider the place produced to prove this to be a word pertaining to a sacrifice. And it will quickly appear that these gentlemen are very unlucky in the choice of their place. Gideon requests of the person sent to him, that he might *bring forth his present*, and set it before him, Judges vi. 18. He offers a refreshment, but here is no mention of any sacrifice; it is spoken of a meal, not of a sacrifice; and this will appear by the context. Gideon was no priest, and therefore might not sacrifice, he being of another tribe, ver. 15, nor is it to be imagined he would sacrifice to a man, as he took him for (ver. 22.) at that time: to say that Gideon brought to this person that he might sacrifice, is without all ground, and will oblige him that affirms it to prove that he took him for a priest. Besides, Gideon did not bring forth his kid alive, he did not sprinkle the blood, or offer the fat upon the altar as a sacrifice, but he *went in and made ready the kid: he put the flesh in a basket, and the broth in a pot*, ver. 19. These are things not agreeable to a sacrifice, and altogether inconsistent with the laws of a *mincha* or *meat-offering*, as we render that word when it signifies a *sacrifice*: for that offering it was expressly required, that it should be offered by the sons of Aaron, Levit. vi. 14, and at the altar. Here are abundant proofs of no sacrifice. Indeed the vulgar Latin chanced to render what we render *present*, by *sacrificium*; and the word sometimes signifies so: but as the Syriac renders it by *meal* or *refreshment*, so it is infinitely

[t] Vid. Bonfrer. in Gen. xiv. 18. [u] Vid. Doway Bible, with Annotations on Gen. xiv. 12. Printed 1635.

plain from what has been said above, that here is no mention of a sacrifice. It is very well known that the Hebrew word which we render *present*[x], is a word, that when it is considered apart from its signification of *a sacrifice or holy oblation*, signifies a *gift* or *present*, and is so interpreted by the LXXII; and our English have well rendered the word in this place, though they have not concealed the other signification of it in their marginal reading.

For what Bellarmine adds, "that there was no need that Melchizedek should give Abram any refreshment, because he returned with great spoils, and those who followed him had eaten before," ver. 24, it is of no weight at all.

For it is not said, that Abram had eaten; nor how long since it was that his followers had; nor do we know that they had plenty of bread and wine among their spoils. However, Melchizedek hospitably brought forth bread and wine, whatever Abram's necessity might be. Abram was blessed before, and yet Melchizedek blessed him; and why might not he bring forth corporal refreshment, though he had great spoils?

Bellarmine urgeth, "that the scripture so often mentioning the priesthood of Melchizedek as distinct from that of Aaron, and very like to that of Christ, it ought also somewhere to deliver what was the sacrifice of Melchizedek. For a priesthood is ordained for sacrifice; and where the sacrifice is unknown, there the priesthood is unknown also. But there is no mention of any sacrifice which Melchizedek offered, if it be not mentioned here." I answer,

1. A man must be a priest before he hath right to sacrifice; and will continue so though he never sacrifice, or cease to do it. One of these may be without the other, and therefore may be known without the other. The priests of Israel continued priests after they were by their age discharged from public service. It is very absurd to affirm, that a priest continues no longer a priest than he sacrificeth. The priests of the Roman church keep their character, though they never say mass.

2. It does not become us to prescribe to God. He thought

[x] 1 Sam. viii. 2. 1 Kings iv. 21. 2 Kings viii. 8. with the LXXII. and Heb. v. 1.

not fit to mention the genealogy of Melchizedek, nor is he obliged to tell us what sacrifice he offered.

It is further urged from these words, *for he was the priest*, which contain the reasons why he brought forth bread and wine, and constrains us to grant that this was a sacrifice. These words, *for he was the priest*, &c. can have no other sense, but that he did the function of a priest in the bread and wine which he brought. So it is expressed in the annotations of the Doway Bible. Bonfrerius goes further, and does not only lay hold of the causal particle to prove a sacrifice, but affirms that there can be no other cause why Christ should be styled *a priest after the order of Melchizedek*. I answer.

First, That this causal particle *for*, on which they lay so great a stress, is not in the Hebrew text, nor in the LXXII. nor in the citation from them by Epiphanius[y]: and though the Hebrew particle does in some places stand for a causal, yet it being most commonly a copulative, there is no shadow of reason why we should reject the most received, and betake ourselves to the most infrequent acceptation of it.

Secondly, That this *for* was not in the ancient Latin version, however it be now in the vulgar. It is certain that Hierom[z], in his Hebrew Questions, hath it not. Nor hath he it in his Epistle to Evagrius, where he quotes this text in Hebrew, and translates the words into Latin. *And he was the priest*, he translates, *Erat autem sacerdos:* after the same manner St. Cyprian[a] quotes this passage, *Fuit autem sacerdos*, &c. And thus also St. Austin hath it. In a Latin Bible printed at Lyons, (no protestant Bible, you may be sure,) in the year 1527, we find it thus; *et ipse erat sacerdos Deo altissimo*. And therefore these words may well relate to what follows, ver. 19, *and he blessed him, and said*, &c. Nor ought our version to be blamed for rendering the words as we now have them in our Bibles, nor our divines for connecting them with the following. We have an English Bible printed in the days of Henry the Eighth, (which I hope our adversaries will not call by way of reproach a *protestant* Bible[b],) that will justify us. Thus

y Epiphan. advers. Hæres. lib. 11. tom. 1.

z Et ipse sacerdos Dei excelsi, &c. Hieron. Quæst. Hebr. in Genes.

a Cyprian. Epist. ad Celsum, De Doctrin. Christian. l. 4. c. 21.

b Printed 1535.

we find it there; *But Melchizedek the king of Salem brought forth bread and wine. And he beynge the priest of the most hye God, blessed him and said, &c.* Nor was this corrected in another edition of the year 1537, where we find it, *And he being the priest of the most hyghest God, blessed him, &c.*

Bellarmine proceeds and urgeth, that in the Hebrew text, after these words, *priest of the most high God*, there is an accent, (called *soph pasuk*,) as a sign that the period is there terminated, and those words cannot be connected to the following, *and he blessed him*, but to the foregoing, where it is said, *he brought forth bread and wine.* This distinction (he must mean of verses) he tells us is found in the Chaldee, Greek, and Latin text. This he thinks so weighty a matter, that without the causal particle, for which he contended above, it is from hence plain that the bread and wine were brought forth for sacrifice.

To this I answer,

First, That he might have spared his pains. There was no need he should appeal to the Hebrew, Chaldee, Greek, and Latin, that the verse ended there, (for *soph pasuk* signifies no more but the end of the verse,) for our English version ends the verse there also; so far were our interpreters from innovating, or from thinking this any thing to the purpose in hand.

Secondly, Though our English do observe this distinction of verses which the cardinal contends for, yet certain it is that their own Bibles have not observed it; and he does but wound his own church when he strikes at ours. I have given one instance above, and need only to add, that the vulgar Latin, which they of the church of Rome adhere to, observes not this distinction which the cardinal lays so great a stress upon. For thus the vulgar, *At vero Melchizedek rex Salem proferens panem et vinum* (*erat enim sacerdos Dei altissimi*) *benedixit ei et ait*, &c. We see here a plain connexion or conjunction of those words, which the cardinal will not allow of a little above.

Thirdly, Certain it is, that this *soph pasuk* hath no such force as the cardinal pretends. And it is very surprising to me, that the cardinal, who pretended to skill in the Hebrew language, and wrote a Hebrew Grammar, should discourse

at this weak rate. It were very easy to produce many instances where the *soph pasuk* does not terminate the period, nor restrain what goes before it from connecting with what follows it. Gen. xxiii. 17. it is said, that *the field, and cave, &c. were made sure:* there in the Hebrew we have a *soph pasuk*, which yet does not terminate the period, or forbid the connexion of those words with the following. It follows, ver. 18, *unto Abraham for a possession*, &c. To which may be added, Gen. xlviii. 15, 16; Deut. xxviii. 56, 57; chap. xxx. ver. 17, 18: to which may be added, 1 Kings viii. 15, 16, and ver. 31, 32, &c.; chap. x. 4, 5; 2 Chron. xxx. 18, 19. I dare appeal to the conscience of any honest man that understands any thing of this matter, whether this be not a mere shift and empty pretence, which yet the cardinal lays a great stress and weight upon.

Fourthly, Nor is there any need at all of this pother which the cardinal makes, the words of Moses being very plain and distinct. For he represents Melchizedek as a *king:* and as an instance of his royal bounty, tells us, that he brought forth bread and wine: and also as a *priest:* and as such he is said to bless Abram, and to take tithes of him.

Bellarmine proceeds, and denies that Melchizedek blessed Abram as a priest, whereas Abram himself was a priest; and therefore he did not bless him as a priest, but as a greater, or as one absolutely greater, being king and priest. It is not peculiar to a priest to bless; Solomon blessed the people, and so did David and Joshua. And the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews does not, from his blessing Abram, infer that he was a priest, but only that he was greater than Abram.

To this I answer,

First, That this was a sacerdotal blessing is very evident, it being not only joined with receiving tithes, but is, together with that of receiving tithes, produced by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, when he undertakes to prove Christ (as of the order of Melchizedek) to be a priest of an higher rank and order than that of Aaron. To what purpose did he produce this passage, if the benediction of Melchizedek were not a sacerdotal action, as well as his receiving tithes?

Secondly, Abram was a prince as well as a priest[c], and

[c] Gen. xxiii. 6 with chap. xiv. 14, 21, 24.

therefore, if because he was a priest he did not bless him, it may be said with as good reason, that he being a prince, Melchizedek could not bless him as such an one.

Thirdly, There was no need that the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews should from this blessing infer that Melchizedek was a priest. This, Moses and the Psalmist, both which he cites, had said expressly. But that he was a greater priest than Aaron, (which supposeth him a priest,) he proves from his benediction and receiving tithes, Heb. vii.

The cardinal goes on, and urgeth, "that if Christ be a priest after the order of Melchizedek, he must agree with him in that which belonged peculiarly to his priesthood, viz. the form of such a sacrifice. This sacrifice he makes proper to his priesthood: that he blessed and received tithes, was common to him with the Aaronical priesthood; that he was not anointed with sensible oil, that he had no predecessor or successor, was common to him with Abel and others; that his genealogy is not reported, is not only extrinsical to his priesthood, but also common to him with Job, Elias, and others; but his offering bread and wine is proper to him, and chiefly belongs to his priesthood, it being a proper act thereof."

To which I answer,

First, That the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, who well understood what chiefly belonged to the priesthood of Melchizedek, does not so much as mention his bringing forth (much less his offering) bread and wine; he does not do it there, where he professedly treats of the priesthood of Melchizedek, and its taking place of that of Aaron: he mentions it not even there where he tells us both of his blessing Abram and taking tithes; and therefore, according to the cardinal, he hath omitted that which chiefly belongs to his priesthood.

Secondly, That he blessed and tithed Abram, from whom Levi and Aaron descended, is that which the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews mentions, and brings as an argument to prove him superior to the Aaronical priests; and surely this cannot belong in common to the sons of Aaron.

Thirdly, That Abel, Job, and Elias, are nowhere represented under the character of *priests of the most high God:* and therefore they are impertinently mentioned by the cardinal: besides, we have Abel's genealogy, an account of the

country of Elias, and of the country, and wife, and children, and death of Job; but there is not in the Book of Genesis, which gives the genealogy of others, any account of that of Melchizedek, in whom alone all the particulars meet, which the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews mentions as belonging to him.

Fourthly, That if it were granted (which never can be proved) that Melchizedek did offer bread and wine, yet would not this be proper to him, but common to him with the sons of Aaron.

I proceed to prove,

II. That if Melchizedek had offered such a sacrifice, it will not thence follow that the priesthood of Melchizedek consisted in this, and was by this distinguished from that of Aaron.

The reason is obvious, viz. because the sons of Aaron did also offer bread and wine: this appears abundantly from Levit. ii. with Exod. xxix. 40. and Numb. xxviii. 13, 14. That in which the priesthood of Melchizedek does peculiarly consist, cannot belong to Aaron; but the offering of bread and wine did belong to Aaron and his sons, and cannot therefore be peculiar to Melchizedek. Bellarmine is forced to confess, that under the Aaronical priesthood bread and wine were sacrificed; but then he thinks to come off by subterfuges.

What he says is to this effect: 1. That the bread and wine sacrificed by Aaron and his sons was not a principal sacrifice, but rather a part, or kind of sauce to some other sacrifice; that which Melchizedek offered was by itself. 2. The bread which Aaron and his sons offered was always sprinkled with oil; that of Melchizedek was simple bread. 3. Another difference between those two priesthoods was this, that Aaron offered all sorts of sacrifices, bloody and unbloody, but Melchizedek the unbloody only. To which I answer,

First, That it is not universally true that the meat-offering was a sauce, or accessory to some other sacrifice. This speaks the cardinal's ignorance, or something worse. The Hebrew doctors[d] give us a truer account of things, when they tell us of a double mincha, or meat-offering, that was accessory or be-

[d] מנחה נסכים ד"ה יקרי עשרון. Vid. Maimon. Praefat. in Menach. Vid. Abarbinel. Praefat. in Levit.

longed to another sacrifice, and that which was solitary and offered by itself: the latter of these was either public or private. They reckon three of the first sort, and five of the second, which I shall not need to repeat here. Nor is this to be rejected as a rabbinical fancy; for the scripture assures us, that this meat-offering was sometimes solitary, and noways belonging to any other offering. This appears from Levit. v. 11, 12, 13.

Secondly, That the bread which Aaron offered was always sprinkled with oil, is not true; and yet if it were, it were nothing to the purpose. How can the cardinal tell but that the bread of Melchizedek might have some oil in it also? Oil is expressly forbid in the bread-offering, Levit. v. 11, and also in that mentioned Numb. v. 15; and a man may justly admire the cardinal should affirm, "that the bread offered by Aaronical priests was sprinkled with oil."

Thirdly, The other difference assigned between the two priesthoods is groundless, and can never be proved; who will believe this to be the difference between the priesthood of Melchizedek and Aaron, that the former offered one sort of sacrifice, the latter all: that Aaron should offer the principal, Melchizedek only the accessory; Melchizedek only simple bread, the other, bread with oil and incense: in a word, that Melchizedek's sacrifice was short of Aaron's, and therefore his priesthood better: for a bloody sacrifice was of greater value than a bread-offering, which was then accepted when the other could not be had, Lev. v. 11.

Fourthly, According to the account of our adversaries, Jesus Christ would be a priest after the order of Aaron; for on the cross he offered a bloody, and in the eucharist, according to them, an unbloody sacrifice.

Bellarmine pretends, that "if Christ be a priest for ever, the rite of sacrificing must continue for ever: he cannot be said to be a priest who hath no sacrifice to offer. But there can be no sacrifice, if we destroy that of the mass." To which I answer,

First, That the priest's office was never restrained to sacrificing; that was but one part of the priestly office: there were many other offices peculiar to that order of men, besides sprinkling the blood of the sacrifice, and burning the parts of it, Levit. i. 5. chap. iv. 6. with chap. i. 8. Such were, the

blessing the people, Numb. vi. 23. chap. viii. 2. chap. x. 8. the lighting the lamps, blowing the trumpets, &c.

Secondly, As it was a part of the high priest's office, on the day of expiation, to carry the blood of the expiatory sacrifice every year into the holy of holies[e]; so part of our Saviour's high priest's office is to be done in the heavenly sanctuary, where he is for ever during this world presenting the merit of his oblation, and interceding for us. And the resemblance our Saviour had to Melchizedek was in this, that he abideth a priest for ever in doing this. Christ did upon the cross perfect his oblation, but not finish his priestly office; for he is a priest for ever, "not as offering sacrifices," as Theodoret[f] well observes, "for he once offered his body, but as a mediator, bringing believers unto God."

Thirdly, He is a priest for ever, because he can never be despoiled of this character and dignity, *and ever liveth to make intercession for us*, Heb. vii. 25. He is so, *not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life*, ver. 10. But this does not infer the repetition of his oblation made on the cross. This repetition would derogate from the virtue of that oblation, *For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified*, Heb. x. 14. *Such an High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself*, Heb. vii. 26, 27.

III. "That granting that Melchizedek did offer such a sacrifice, and that thereby his priesthood was distinguished from that of Aaron; it does not hence follow that Christ ought to institute in his church an unbloody sacrifice under the species of bread and wine."

The sacrifice of the mass will not result from this, nor by any sufficient reason can it be inferred from it. For why may not the sacrifice of the cross, instead of the mass, be sufficient? Christ there gave himself up for the life of the world: the bread that came down from heaven, and that is the food of our souls, was there broken: there was his blood shed which

[e] Vid. Annotations on St. Paul's Epistles, printed at Oxford 1684, on Heb. viii. 1. [f] Theodoret in Heb. vi. 20.

gives us life. What need of the sacrifice of the mass? Is there any reason to conclude that must be instituted upon supposition of the premises? There is a great difference between the sacrifice of Melchizedek and that of the mass: what was offered in one was bread and wine; the other is the body and blood of Christ: the substance of bread and wine is in one, the accidents only in the other; we read nothing of consecration of the one, the other is consecrated with great ceremony. Melchizedek was a king, without genealogy, alone, without predecessor or successor: is there any thing like this in the mass priests? Melchizedek offered once, and gave of his oblation to the uncircumcised: is there any thing like this in the mass? Here is no blood in Melchizedek's oblation: will he allow this to be said of the mass? His oblation depended on no other, but that of the mass is dependent on that of the cross. If the sacrifice of the mass must hence be established, one would think the resemblance between it and the other should be greater.

So it is; the doctrine which the church of Rome teacheth of the sacrifice of the mass needs proof from scripture, and they that maintain the doctrine are willing to defend it thence. But certain it is, that many wise men of the church of Rome know well, that it cannot be maintained from this and other scriptures produced to that purpose. This was frankly acknowledged by Georgius di Ataide[z], a divine of the kingdom of Portugal, in the council of Trent, who was against those who went about to prove the sacrifice of the mass from the scriptures, and "sought to find in the scriptures that which is not there, giving occasion to the adversaries to calumniate the truth, while they see it grounded upon such an unstable sand." He added, "as to the fact of Melchizedek; that Christ was a priest of that order, as he was the only-begotten, eternal, without predecessor, father, mother, or genealogy. And that this is proved too plainly by the Epistle to the Hebrews, where St. Paul, discoursing at large of this place, doth handle the eternity and singularity of this priesthood, and maketh no mention of the bread and wine. He repeated the doctrine of St. Austin, that when there is a fit place for any thing to be spoken, and it is not spoken, an argument may be drawn from

[z] Vid. History of the Council of Trent, p. 546.

the authority negatively." I have before mentioned cardinal Cajetan affirming, that in this story of Melchizedek there is no mention of sacrifice or oblation. Salmeron[h], to the same purpose, is so far from pretending that the mass is taught in the scriptures, that he placeth it among those apostolical traditions which were not committed to writing. Mariana, in his commentaries on Genesis, does indeed affirm, that Melchizedek sacrificed or offered to God bread and wine, "the symbol," says he, "of our sacrifice," for which he quotes St. Hierom, and tells us, that the Psalmist's words, *Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek*, and the words of St. Paul to the Hebrews, refer to the same matter; but that which is very surprising is this, that the same Mariana, when he writes upon the Hebrews, finds nothing there to this purpose; and though he refers to that Epistle in his notes upon Genesis, yet when he comes to the place, he refers indeed to his notes on Genesis, but can find nothing of the sacrifice he mentions there, and refers to the Epistle to the Hebrews for; instead of satisfying his reader, he hath these words[i], *Miror in hoc capite*, &c.; "I wonder that in this chapter, among so many similitudes by which Melchizedek represented Christ, that he says nothing of the sacrifice of bread and wine which Melchizedek offered, as we have said (Gen. xiv. 18.) the symbol of our sacrifice and eucharist: of which I had rather hear others than pronounce myself." A plain confession that there was nothing to be found in this place to the purpose for which he alleged it.

The second pretence for the sacrifice of the mass is fetched from the paschal lamb, Exod. xii. It seems very hard to understand how this can be any thing like an argument; but we must take it as it is. Cardinal Bellarmine[k] endeavours to form an argument from hence; and thus it is: "The celebration of the passover was an express figure of the eucharist; but the passover was a sacrifice, therefore the eucharist must be so too, that the antitype may answer the type."

I answer,

First, That this way of reasoning will do them one time or other more hurt than good. It would spoil all, were it used in

[h] Salmeron in Epistol. S. Paul. Commentar. tom. 13. p. 219.

[i] Mariana in Heb. vii. 27.

[k] Bellarmin. de Missa, l. 1. c. 7.

the case of Melchizedek. His bread and wine was an express figure of the eucharist; but that was really bread and wine which he brought forth, and therefore the substance of bread and wine remains in the eucharist, that the antitype may answer the type: such an argument will be apt to go too far, and prove too much, and turn head upon them that use it. Again, by this way of arguing, we may conclude that Christ was slain and roasted before he could be received in the eucharist; for so it was with the type, and the antitype ought to answer the type.

Secondly, It ought to be proved, that the paschal lamb was a type of the eucharist. This is taken for granted indeed; the truth is, it can never be proved. The paschal lamb was indeed a type of the sacrifice of Christ upon the cross: here is a marvellous agreement between the type and the antitype, as it were easy to shew. That the paschal lamb was a type of the sacrifice of Christ upon the cross is undeniable. St. Paul says, 1 Cor. v. 7, *Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us:* and when Christ suffered, *a bone of him was not to be broken*, John xix. 36; and it is said, *that the scripture might be fulfilled*, Exod. xii. 46. This was a known law of the paschal lamb, that a bone of it was not to be broken.

But he pretends to prove, that the paschal lamb was a type of the eucharist, and to that purpose produceth the words above named, *Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.* He affirms that it appears from the Gospel, that the apostles did eat Christ's flesh before his passion, and consequently did eat the true paschal Lamb, to the feasting upon which we are exhorted, 1 Cor. v. 8, *Let us keep the feast*, &c. This feast must follow the immolation, the lamb must first be slain before it can be eaten: and therefore immolation must precede the manducation in the last supper, before the passion of Christ.

I answer,

First, Here is no proof in all this; nothing but bold affirmation. And because the doctrine of the mass is framed, it must be maintained: what should be proved is taken for granted, viz. that the paschal lamb was a figure of the eucharist. Here is no proof, but instead of it false reasoning. For this may be retorted: The paschal lamb was not to be eaten till it was slain, and the blood of it shed: but the eu-

charist before Christ's passion was eaten before Christ's blood was shed on the cross: therefore that eucharist was not the antitype of the eating of the paschal lamb.

Secondly, As to the place alleged, viz. *Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us*, it is evident that it cannot be consistent with the doctrine of an unbloody sacrifice, and corporal manducation, which the church of Rome contends for. For the word *sacrificed* imports being slain or killed, and also that it is already past. It is, *is* (or *hath been*) *sacrificed for us*. He speaks of something known and notorious. And whereas he says, *Let us keep the feast*, it is manifest that he alludes to the feast of unleavened bread, which commenced upon the slaying of the paschal lamb. Nor can he be supposed here to require a corporal manducation of the natural flesh of Christ; for *the leaven* and *the eating* and *the bread* must be understood alike. Now it is certain that *the leaven of malice and wickedness* is not eaten with the mouth; nor is *the bread of sincerity and truth* to be chewed by the teeth; and therefore the eating cannot be meant of a bodily eating, but a spiritual, John vi. 35.

The cardinal endeavours to prove the paschal lamb a figure of the eucharist.

First, "Because the eucharist was instituted at the time when the paschal lamb was slain."

Secondly, "That lamb was slain in memory of the Lord's passing over, and the deliverance out of Egypt; the eucharist is in memory of Christ's passage from this world to his Father, and our deliverance from the power of Satan."

Thirdly, "The lamb was slain that it might be eaten as a *viaticum*, and was eaten by the Israelites like travellers, with staves in their hands, &c.; so is the eucharist a *viaticum* of them that travel to an heavenly country."

Fourthly, "The lamb might be eaten by none but such as were circumcised and clean, and in Jerusalem; so they must be baptized, clean, and in the catholic church, that partake of the eucharist."

I answer,

I. As to the first, that a figure should be completed on the day of its first institution or celebration is by no means necessary. The high priest's going into the holy of holies was a

figure of Christ's ascension into heaven, but was not performed on the same day or month in which Christ ascended. Again, though the eucharist were instituted at the time of the passover, yet was this by accident, and not by any law belonging to the eucharist. It was instituted on the fourteenth day of the first month, at the time of the passover: there was reason why the passover should be celebrated then; but the eucharist, though it happened to be then appointed, is not restrained to that particular time. It was in the mean conveniently instituted at the close of the passover, as that which was to take its place, the eucharist being a memorial of the death of Christ, as the paschal lamb was the type of it, and as such was very congruously appointed at the approach of his death. But though the passover was restrained to a certain month and day, and to be offered but once in the year, and eaten in the evening of the day, and followed with a feast of unleavened bread, yet these are not the laws of the eucharist, or usages peculiar to the mass.

II. As to the second; it is granted that the paschal lamb was slain, and its blood put upon the doorposts, to avert the destroying angel, and continued afterwards as a memorial of the deliverance out of Egypt; but however this suits with the death of Christ, by which we are saved from the wrath of God, and rescued from the power of the Devil; yet it by no means corresponds with the eucharist, or unbloody sacrifice of the mass.

III. As to the third; whatever the eucharist be to the devout partaker, yet no stress ought to be laid upon this correspondence between it and the passover kept in Egypt, because that was a rite peculiar to the passover of Egypt, as the Hebrew doctors well observe, and not used in after-ages. Besides, it is from the death of Christ we hope to enter into an heavenly country, of which the eucharist is but a sacrament.

IV. As to the fourth; those resemblances mentioned do not infer that the paschal lamb was a figure of the eucharist, because those conditions, as to person and place, were required in other religious services; besides, there are many other things in which the difference between the passover and sacrifice of the mass is very discernible; not to repeat, that the passover was

restrained to a month, a day, an evening, &c., it ought to be celebrated according to its first institution, to be eaten that evening, and not reserved, and not to be carried abroad in procession. Let our adversaries say how this can agree with their sacrifice of the mass.

For the pains which the cardinal takes to prove the passover a sacrifice, he need not have taken it, for I do readily grant it, nor do I see any just cause to deny it; but all this will not prove it a figure of the eucharist. Besides, though it be a sacrifice, yet it was not propitiatory, much less so for the dead as well as living, and therefore no very fit figure of the sacrifice of the mass. Again, were it proved a figure of the eucharist, this would be no competent proof for the sacrifice of the mass. For the passover among the Jews may be considered either as a sacrament of that church, or as a sacrifice strictly so called; supposing it a figure of the eucharist in the first respect, this will not establish the sacrifice of the mass.

I now proceed to the third pretence from the holy scriptures for the sacrifice of the mass, and that is fetched from Exod. xxiv. where, after the law given at Mount Sinai, God enters into covenant with the Israelites, promiseth them much good, and they promise obedience: this covenant was confirmed by a solemn sacrifice, and the sprinkling of blood. It is said, *Behold the blood of the covenant which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words*, ver. 8. It is pretended that this figure was fulfilled in the last supper in the institution of the eucharist, and therefore the blood of that old testament being the blood of a victim properly sacrificed, the blood of the new testament must be the blood of a proper sacrifice also, and therefore Christ is a victim sacrificed in the eucharist.

From this it might have been as well inferred, and with as much truth, that that of Moses being a sacrifice of blood, that of the mass must also be a bloody sacrifice. But this would be too much. And they who maintain the doctrine of the mass will infer no more from these figures than will just serve their purpose; otherwise it were very natural to infer the substance of bread and wine in the eucharist, and not accidents only, from the bread and wine of Melchizedek; and that

both kinds are in the eucharist to be received. But they that we have to do with will take care that these figures shall not be used against their received doctrine. And yet we find that the ancient Fathers of the church do affirm, that "Christ offered the same oblation with Melchizedek;" and infer from thence, that the symbols in the eucharist are bread and wine. For instances to this purpose I refer the reader to the learned author of a late treatise[l].

Cardinal Bellarmine takes a great deal of pains to prove the mass from this chapter of Exodus. This figure, he conceits, must be completed in the last supper and institution of the eucharist: then he says the new testament was made, and the words, *This cup is the new testament in my blood*, &c. confirm him in this belief. After this he says, "If Christ's testament was not made in the last supper, it must be made on the cross;" and yet, says he, "all the conditions of a testament agree with the last supper, none of them with the cross;" and here he enlargeth to no less than seven particulars[m].

But he might have spared his pains; for we do not believe that the new testament, or covenant, strictly speaking, was made either on the cross or in the last supper. Not on the cross, for we are well assured that it was then ratified and dedicated, Heb. ix. 18, which supposeth it to have a being before. And for the Lord's supper, it is gross to call it the new testament or covenant, though it be indeed one of the sacraments of it. Were it the new testament itself, baptism (a sacrament of the new testament) would be a sacrament of the Lord's supper. Besides, were the supper the new testament, none could be said to partake of this new testament who did not partake of the eucharist, which would exclude, not only those who deceased before the institution of the eucharist, but all others also who died before they did partake of it. When Christ calls the cup *the blood of the new testament*, it is supposed the new testament was in being before. And thus it was when the covenant was ratified in the time of Moses. *Behold the blood of the covenant*, says he, *which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words*, Exod. xxiv. 8. That blood was not the very covenant, for that was

[l] Full View of the Eucharist, p. 101. &c. [m] Bellarm. de Miss. l. 1. c. 8.

in being before; and we read of the *book of the covenant*, ver. 7, but it was the blood by which it was ratified and confirmed. If the old covenant were not made in the ceremony mentioned Exod. xxiv, then is that matter ill applied to the eucharist by him that affirms the new covenant or testament to be therein made. And if that ceremony did but declare and confirm the old testament, Heb. ix. 18, then was it accomplished on the cross, and still does not belong to the eucharist, much less prove the sacrifice of the mass.

The figure (Exod. xxiv.) is so far from proving the sacrifice of the mass, that it rather makes against it. The blood of the new testament, in correspondence to that of the old, Exod. xxiv, must be the blood of a victim slain before; but Jesus Christ, in the last supper, was not slain, and therefore the blood of Jesus in the last supper was not the blood of the new testament, and antitype of that figure. If these words of Jesus, *This is my blood of the new testament*, speak the blood already shed, then must Christ have suffered before; if they do not, then are they no proof of the sacrifice of the mass.

I proceed now from the figures, to consider what pretences are fetched from the prophets for the establishing the sacrifice of the mass.

And I find the first which cardinal Bellarmine urgeth is fetched from the words of the man of God to Eli, 1 Sam. ii. 35; viz. *I will raise me up a faithful priest, that shall do according to that which is in mine heart and in my mind: and I will build him a sure house: and he shall walk before mine anointed for ever.* "This place some of the ancients expound," says he, "of the priesthood and sacrifice of Christians succeeding the Aaronical, and which would remain to the end of the world." I answer,

That God in the holy scriptures expounds this place otherwise; Solomon removed Abiathar, of the house of Eli, 1 Kings ii. 27, *that he might fulfil the word of the Lord, which he spake concerning the house of Eli in Shiloh.* And this was all that the man of God means, when he denounceth against Eli's father's house, 1 Sam. ii. 31; for by his father's house is meant, not the house of Aaron, but of Ithamar; and were it not so, the words could not be fulfilled in rejecting

Abiathar, and setting up Sadok, who was descended from Aaron also. After all, to bear us down that this was a type of the mass priests, who were to succeed the Aaronical, is to beg, and not prove the question; there being no shadow of a proof offered.

The second proof is from Solomon's words, Prov. ix. 1, 2. *Wisdom hath builded her house; she hath hewn out her seven pillars: she hath killed her beasts*, &c. Now it will seem hard to prove the sacrifice of the mass from hence; nor is there any pretence more than that St. Cyprian and St. Augustin are produced applying these words to the eucharist. I answer,

That here is no proof of the sacrifice of the mass, as it is now taught in the Roman church; no evidence from the text that these words have any reference to the eucharist; no mention of a sacrifice, but rather of a feast; it is a *table*, ver. 2, not an *altar* that men are invited to, *to eat bread and drink wine*, ver. 5. and it is all but parabolical, such as that of St. Matthew xxii. and taken out of a book of parables too.

The third pretence is taken from these words, Isai. xix. 19. 21: *In that day shall there be an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt*, &c.—*and the Egyptians shall know the Lord in that day, and shall do sacrifice and oblation*, &c. "These sacrifices must be such, strictly so called, because of the express mention of an *altar*, and therefore they plainly shew, that among the Gentiles in the days of the Messias, a *sacrifice*, strictly so called, should be offered up." I answer,

First, That I grant that this place speaks of what shall obtain among the Gentiles in the days of the Messias; that they should embrace the true religion, expressed here in such terms as were at that time best understood. The Christian worship is expressed in terms agreeing to what obtained under the law of Moses, as I shall have further occasion to observe. No wonder then that it is expressed here by *speaking the language of Canaan*, by *swearing to the Lord*, by *erecting an altar*, *doing sacrifice*, and *making vows*; these being acts of religion that then obtained.

Secondly, We cannot infer from hence the sacrifice of the mass, for there is no necessity that the altar here should infer a sacrifice strictly so called; both because every altar does

not suppose such a sacrifice, (see Joshua xxii. 26, 27.) and that the sacrifices mentioned here are spiritual; all other sacrifices were annexed to one certain place, (see Deut. xii. 13, 14.) And the setting up an altar, strictly so called, would be a very unfit expression of the embracing the true religion, during the dispensation of Moses. The altar here is not said to be for sacrifice, but the altar and pillar are to be for a sign and witness, ver. 20. And for the sacrifices and oblations, St. Hierom, upon the place, interprets them in a spiritual sense, of a "contrite spirit," and the "elevation of the hands in devout prayer." If so, the cardinal had better not have mentioned St. Hierom, when he urgeth this text for proof of the sacrifice of the mass. For as he confesseth [n], "no visible altar is necessary for spiritual sacrifices."

The fourth pretence is taken from the same prophet [o], *And I will also take of them for priests and for Levites, saith the Lord.* To which are added these of Jeremiah, *Neither shall the priests the Levites want a man before me to offer burnt offerings, and to kindle meat offerings, and to do sacrifice continually.* These words, the cardinal contends, must be understood of Christ's priests, and appeals to St. Hierom and to Theodoret in the case, and a great stress he lays upon this, that they were to offer burnt offerings. I answer,

First, that I am content to yield to the cardinal, that the words have reference to Christian priests, or ministers in holy things; I will not contend about it.

Secondly, these words are to be literally understood, or they are not; if they are, then are Christian priests obliged to burnt offerings and meat offerings, &c. If they are not, they are impertinently produced as a proof of the sacrifice of the mass; which, according to the church of Rome, is a sacrifice strictly so called, and according to the letter. If we keep to the letter, they prove too much; if not, they prove too little.

Thirdly, it is evident that these words are not to be understood according to the strict letter; for if they were, they would prove the perpetuity of the Aaronical priesthood. For this covenant with the Levites the priests, God's minis-

[n] Ad sacrificia spiritualia nullum altare visibile necessarium est.
[o] Isaiah lxvi. 21. with Jer. xxxiii. 18.

ters, Jer. xxxiii. 20, 21. shall not sooner fail than the covenant of God of the day and of the night. And it is without ground that a real sacrifice is inferred from hence, when the offering mentioned in Isaiah, chap. lxvi. 20, cannot be understood of a sacrifice strictly so called, it being an offering of men. And it is still very unjust to quote St. Hierom [p] and Theodoret [q] for the proof of that which is not contested, and to conceal what they say which makes against the main cause contended for. For they expound these places in a spiritual sense, of the spiritual victims which are pleasing to God, and the reasonable sacrifice offered up to him.

The fifth pretence is taken from the prophet Daniel, chap. viii. 11, 12. where it is said, that Antichrist should take away the daily sacrifice. "This place," says Bellarmine, "Hippolytus understands of the sacrifice of the mass; and that though Daniel seems to speak there of Antiochus, yet he does it of him as a type of Antichrist, as appears by comparing this place with Rev. xiii." I answer,

That though it be granted that Antiochus was a figure or type of Antichrist, it does not thence follow that the daily sacrifice of the Jews was a type of, or did in the least infer or suppose, the sacrifice of the mass.

That the daily sacrifice was a sacrifice properly and strictly so called, cannot be denied; but it does not thence follow that it must be a type also of such a sacrifice in the Christian church. There is no need that the type and antitype should be the things of the same species and substance. If there be, the substance of bread and wine in the eucharist must remain, that it may answer the type of Melchizedek's.

Again, the daily sacrifice was not a fit type of the sacrifice of the mass; that was bloody, this an unbloody sacrifice; that was offered morning and evening, this only in the morning; that in one place, and upon one altar, this in many places at once. Nor is there any shadow of reason to believe that daily sacrifice a type of that of the mass.

[p] Hierom. in Isaiah lxvi. 21. [q] Theod. in Jerem. xxxiii. 18.

PART II.

The next place produced as a proof of the sacrifice of the mass by Bellarmine is from the prophet Malachi, chap. i. 11: *My name shall be great among the Gentiles: and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering*, &c. This is thought an eminent proof of the sacrifice of the mass. Bellarmine might have spared his pains he took to prove that the words cannot be understood of the sacrifice of the cross, nor of the Jewish sacrifices, nor of those of the pious Gentiles before the coming of Christ, nor of the idolatrous Gentiles: I easily grant all this. The great question between us is, Whether the words be to be understood of the sacrifice of the mass, or not; or of other spiritual sacrifices, such as prayer, and praise, &c.?

It is not sufficient to justify the doctrine of the sacrifice of the mass, that these words are by the ancients applied to the eucharist, and allowed to belong to it; because the eucharist is not by us denied in some sense to be a sacrifice; nor were it any hard thing to shew upon what reasons it is frequently called so by the ancient writers. But we are now to consider the doctrine of the Roman church, by which the sacrifice of the mass is affirmed to be a proper sacrifice, propitiatory for the sins of the living and the dead; and we will inquire if any such thing may be learned from this place.

There is nothing in the words themselves that will oblige us to believe that they are to be understood of a sacrifice strictly and properly so called, that Christians were to offer up to God. *Incense and a pure offering* do not constrain us to understand the words of a proper sacrifice.

For *incense*, it is to be understood properly and literally of material incense, or improperly, of the prayers and devotions of the Christians. If taken in its proper sense, then are Christians obliged to offer incense still, as the Jews were by the law of Moses; and yet the first and best Christians offered no incense. This we learn from the ancient apologists for the Christian religion. *Thura plane non eminus*, says Tertullian [a]. Instead of incense, he tells us what Christians offered, *Orationem de carne pudica, de anima innocenti, de spiritu sancto*

[a] Apolog. c. 42. and c. 30.

profectam; non grana thuris unius assis, &c. Arnobius tell us, "that the Christians were accused for want of images and altars," and *quod non cæsorum sanguinem animantium demus, non thura*, &c.[b], and "because they offered not sacrifices and incense." If incense here be taken improperly for the prayers and devotions offered up to God, (as the Chaldee paraphrast understands this place,) then are these words impertinently alleged for proof of a strictly so called or proper sacrifice.

For *the pure offering* here mentioned, it will do no service to the cause in hand; for the word we render *offering*, does often signify, not a *sacrifice*, but a *gift* or *present*. The same word is used in Isaiah, chap. lxvi. 20, where it is said, *They shall bring all your brethren for an offering to the Lord out of all nations upon horses, and in chariots*, &c., where by *offering* no man can understand a sacrifice properly so called. Thus St. Paul, Rom. xv. 16, mentions the *offering up of the Gentiles*; and we Christians are called *an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ*, 1 Pet. ii. 5. And *the pure offering* imports no more than this, that this service or offering is sincere and without mixture, or *a spiritual sacrifice*, in the phrase of St. Peter. More than this comes to can never be collected from those words of Malachi.

Nor shall it need to seem strange to any man, that the spiritual sacrifices of Christians should in the prophets (during the economy of Moses) be described in terms that were conformable to what was used and practised in that time in the nation of the Jews. For nothing is more common than this among those sacred writers. Thus the advancement of the Christian church is expressed by the *establishing the mountain of the Lord's house in the top of the mountains, and exalting it above the hills*, Isaiah ii. 2. And the kingly office of the Messias (chap. ix. 7.) is described by his sitting *upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order and establish it*. Thus are the Christian worshippers (or ministers in holy things) called priests and Levites, and their services are expressed by *offering burnt offerings*, and *kindling meat offerings*, &c. Jer. xxxiii. 18. And Christ's planting his

[b] Advers. Gentes, l. 6.

church is expressed by *building the Lord's temple*, Zech. vi. 12. and the Christian worship by *keeping the feast of tabernacles*, chap. xiv. 16. The Messias himself is sometimes called David, Hosea iii. 5, and his forerunner John Baptist, who was *more than a prophet*, is in this prophet Malachi, chap. iv. 5, promised under the character of Elijah the prophet. No wonder Christian services should be expressed by this prophet under the character of *incense and a pure offering;* Rom. xii. 1, Heb. xiii. 15, Phil. iv. 18, Rom. xv. 16, 2 Tim. iv. 6, Phil. ii. 17, 1 Pet. ii. 5, our spiritual services in the New Testament are thus expressed. Our yielding obedience to Christ; charitable offices and alms; converting men to the faith, or dying for it; praising and glorifying God, are expressed after the same manner. Christ hath made us not only *kings, but priests unto God and his Father*, Rev. i. 6. And now it is not strange that our services should be predicted under the character of *incense and a pure offering*.

The bare letter is not always to be insisted on as a sufficient proof of our proposition. Even in the New Testament we are not always to do this, but much less in the prophetical writings. We are required to *beware of dogs*, Phil. iii. 2; to *have salt in ourselves*, Mark ix. 50; and forbid to *cast pearls before swine*, Matt. vii. 6; but we are concerned here beyond the letter. And our Saviour's words are not sometimes to be understood according to the letter, when he speaks of *living water*, John iv. 10, 32, 34; of *bread that endures for ever*, ver. 9. chap. vi. 27; of the *leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees*, Matt. xvi. 6, 12: nor this offering in Malachi to be understood of a proper sacrifice: and this will appear to those who consider things without prejudice.

The incense cannot be understood according to the letter, as I have shewed before, and must therefore be understood spiritually of the prayers of the faithful, of which the Mosaical incense was a type or figure; none can doubt of it that will compare Psalm cxli. 2. with Luke i. 9, 10, 13. and Rev. viii. 3, 4. These went together, and this prayer is a Christian sacrifice, Heb. xiii. 15. But the incense of Moses was annexed to the sanctuary, this to be *offered in every place*. *I will that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting*, 1 Tim. ii. 8. We may send up this perfume

from our shops and closets; here every pious man is a priest, and his heart an altar.

If *the incense* be spiritual, so must *the pure offering* also; if it be taken properly, then are Christians obliged to offer meat offerings as the Jews did; and then it will be hard to say, whether to all or some of them, for there were several sorts; and if to some, to which of them. And the words being indefinite, we shall not be able to determine what our obligation is. But this cannot be allowed; for it is expressly foretold, Dan. ix. 27, that the Messias should cause to cease זבח ומנחה, i. e. all the offerings by fire whatsoever. But if taken improperly, it will be a very unfit argument to prove a proper sacrifice.

Our Saviour's words to the woman of Samaria will help us to understand these words of the prophet: *Our fathers* (said she to Jesus, John iv. 20, 21.) *worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.* Jesus replies, *Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.* And presently afterward, ver. 23, *The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.* Here is the incense and pure offering, not annexed to a mountain or city, or certain place, (as of old,) but to be offered in every place. This is a spiritual offering, not a legal or typical one. We must worship God in *spirit and in truth*, not according to the type and bare letter.

These spiritual services are called *sacrifices* both in the Old and New Testament, Psalm li. 19. and l. 14, 23; and no other sacrifices but these are required in the New Testament. There is no mention of the sacrifice of the mass. The eucharist is nowhere called a *sacrifice*, nor is the place where it was set called an *altar*; instead of that, the word *table* is used. The eucharist is called the *Lord's supper*, the *communion, breaking of bread*, but not a sacrifice, 1 Cor. x.

The Christians of old were accused by the pagans for impiety, because they had no sacrifice. Athenagoras defends them[c]: he tells the heathens, that the greatest sacrifice was to know God, and that the lifting up of holy hands to him was

[c] Athenagor. Legat. pro Christian.

more than an hecatomb. "What have I to do," says he, "with holocausts? he requires an unbloody sacrifice, and that we offer him a reasonable service." So far was he from affirming that Christians had among them any proper sacrifice.

The ancient Christians understood these words in Malachi of a spiritual sacrifice. Justin Martyr confronts Trypho the Jew [d] with these words of Malachi several times, opposing our Christian sacrifices to the Jewish. Tertullian produceth these words against the Jews, as a proof of the spiritual sacrifices which were to be offered up, when the carnal ones were to be rejected: *De spiritualibus vero sacrificiis addit, dicens, et omni loco sacrificia munda offerentur nomini meo, dicit Dominus.* And in his book against Marcion [e], this pure offering of Malachi is explained by him by *simplex oratio de conscientia pura.* And in his third book against Marcion he explains what is meant by *incense and a pure offering*, by *gloriæ relatio et benedictio, et laus et hymni.* Cyprian [f], quoting several passages out of the Psalms concerning spiritual sacrifices, adds Malachi i. 11. Eusebius cites these words of Malachi [g], and adds, Τὸ γὰρ, &c. "What is said?" says he: "*In every place incense shall be offered, and a pure offering to God:* what is meant, but that not in Jerusalem, or any other particular place, but in every country, and in all nations, they shall offer the incense of prayers, and not by blood, but by pious works offer unto God that which is called *a pure offering?*" Theodoret [h] expounds the *incense and pure offering* by the knowledge and worship of God, and applies our Saviour's words to the woman of Samaria, John iv. 21, 24, as also 1 Tim. ii. 8, to this purpose. And the same author in another place; "If," says he, "the legal priesthood be at an end, and he that is after the order of Melchizedek hath offered a sacrifice, and we maintain that other sacrifices are needless, why then do the priests perform the mystical service [i]?" He answers, That it is evident to them that are instructed in Divine things, that we

[d] Dialog. cum Typh. advers. Judæos.
[e] Contra Marcion. lib. 4.
[f] Advers. Judæos, l. 1. c. 16.
[g] Demonstrat. l. 1. c. 6.
[h] Theodoret. in Mal. i.
[i] Μυστικὴν λειτουργίαν.

offer no other kind of sacrifice: ἀλλὰ τῆς μιᾶς ἐκείνης καὶ σωτηρίου τὴν μνήμην ἐπιτελοῦμεν, i. e. "we only celebrate the memory of that one saving sacrifice [k]." From what hath been said, it appears that the words of the prophet are no proof of the sacrifice of the mass; and that to interpret them of the spiritual services of Christians cannot be charged with novelty. And we may, from what hath been said, learn, that cardinal Bellarmine had not ground sufficient to affirm, as he hath done [l], "that the Fathers have always understood this place of Malachi of the sacrifice of the eucharist, and not of those good works which may be done by all."

The next place produced by Bellarmine [m] as a proof of the sacrifice of the mass is from the New Testament, viz. John iv. 21, 23, where Jesus, upon the woman of Samaria's inquiry after the place of God's public worship, said to her, *The hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father:* and presently afterwards, *The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.* Here is no mention indeed of mass or sacrifice, nor insinuation of one or the other; and it may seem very strange, that this should be produced to the purpose in hand. I shall put together the cardinal's strength, and then give a distinct answer to all his pretences.

The substance of what he says is this; That it is not unusual by *worship* to understand sacrifice, and to that purpose produceth Gen. xxii. John xii. Acts viii; and that by *worship* (ver. 25.) is meant sacrifice, because the woman's question (ver. 20.) is about sacrifice, and therefore it is reasonable to believe that our Saviour's answer must be so also. Besides, the question was of a worship tied to a certain place, as sacrifice was, and consequently the answer of Jesus must be understood of such a worship. And thence he concludes, that by *true worshippers* (ver. 23.) are meant Christians who worship, i. e. sacrifice to the Father, in spirit and truth, i. e. by a spiritual and true sacrifice, not carnal and typical, as the Jews did. And that the eucharist is a spiritual and true sacrifice, because effected by the Holy Ghost, and the words of

[k] Theodoret. in Heb. viii. 4. [l] Bellarm. de Miss. l. 1. c. 10. [m] Bellarm. de Miss. l. 1. c. 11.

consecration, and is the completion of the old figures, though it be typical with respect to the sacrifice of the cross. And because Jesus says, *the hour cometh, and now is*, he contends that he speaks of a new worship that did not obtain before, as spiritual sacrifices did, and therefore of a proper sacrifice. And that Jesus must speak of external, public, and solemn worship, as that which was to succeed to that of the Jews, which was such. For what he adds concerning the place in Malachi as parallel to this, and speaking of a proper sacrifice, needs not to be considered here, that place in Malachi having been considered before. To these pretences I answer in the following particulars:

First, that the word *worship* does sometimes denote sacrifice, (a great part of the Jewish worship,) cannot be denied; but then it is altogether impertinent to allege it here, unless it did always do so.

Secondly, that it is very certain that the Greek word which we render *worship* does not always denote sacrifice, as appears from John ix. 38; Heb. xi. 21; Rev. xxii. 8; Matt. ix. 10: the word is to be interpreted according to the subject-matter.

Thirdly, that granting the woman's question to be about sacrifice, which I easily allow, yet it does not follow that our Saviour's answer must be understood in the same sense.

For, 1. It is often found otherwise. Our Saviour's words are to be interpreted in a different sense from the question put to him, and the occasion of his words. We have in this chapter several instances to this purpose. The woman speaks of common water to Jesus, when he speaks of *living water* to her. She in her question speaks of the water of Jacob's well, ver. 12, Jesus answers of spiritual water *springing up to eternal life*, ver. 14. Again, his disciples speak to Jesus of corporal food, ver. 31; he replies to them of another kind of food, ver. 32. And when they persist in their inquiry after that kind of food, our Saviour goes on still speaking of a different sort of meat, ver. 33, 34. Our Saviour takes occasion to divert men from temporal to spiritual and heavenly things, and his answers and discourses must not be thought impertinent, because they are not direct to the question propounded, or conformable to the first occasion of them. It

were easy to produce several instances to this purpose. See Luke xiii. 23; John iv. 35, 36. vi. 32, 33.

2. This argument of the cardinal, if admitted, would prove too much. For if the worship our Saviour speaks of must be the same with that in the question of the woman, then must our Saviour's words be understood of bloody sacrifices, for the woman meant such; whereas the sacrifice of the mass is owned to be an unbloody one.

3. It is evident that our Saviour speaks not of such a worship as the woman inquires after; for her question is of such an one as divided the Jews and Samaritans, of such as was tied to a certain place; Jesus speaks of that wherein all Christians should agree, and which should not be affixed to one certain place. The woman inquires of worship by sacrifices, and they were but of two sorts, viz. proper and carnal, of which she must be understood, or else spiritual: it is certain our Saviour does not mean the former, and therefore is to be understood of the latter. *He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second*, Heb. x. 9.

Fourthly, that therefore the interpretation which the cardinal gives of ver. 23 is groundless, and what he affirms (for he proves nothing) is trifling. By *worshipping the Father*, he would have meant *sacrificing to the Father*, and by *in spirit and in truth*, he would have understood a *spiritual and true sacrifice*, and this must be the eucharist. But this is to suppose the thing in question, and not to prove it. For we deny it to be a sacrifice properly so called, we deny it to be the effect of the Holy Ghost, or to be turned into a sacrifice by the words of consecration, or the antitype of the legal sacrifices. Besides, we do not believe the Jewish sacrifices spiritual, because the Holy Spirit directed the Jews to offer them up: nor can we believe their sacrifice of the mass to be such. It is a spiritual worship our Lord here speaks of, his words tell us so; they shall *worship the Father in spirit*, Rom. ii. 22. Circumcision in the spirit denotes the inward circumcision in the heart, and is opposed to the outward in the flesh and letter; and why should *worship in spirit* be meant of a true and proper sacrifice, as that of the mass is affirmed to be? The cardinal's interpretation will, to any ingenuous and unprejudiced mind, appear very absurd and groundless.

For, 1, According to it, neither Jesus, or any of his disciples, or any other holy men, could be said to worship the Father *in spirit and in truth* till the last supper.

2. It is very improbable, that this secret of the sacrifice of the mass should be revealed to this woman; she was a Samaritan, the eucharist not yet instituted, and she could not possibly understand what Jesus taught, if this be the meaning of the words.

3. Where there was the fairest occasion of teaching this doctrine, there is no mention of it. This there was in the Epistle to the Hebrews; and yet the cardinal thinks not fit to prove this doctrine from any place of that Epistle. And though he mentions chap. xiii. 10. as a proof produced to that purpose, yet he declines to make use of it. And whereas in the mention of Melchizedek's priesthood, the author of that Epistle makes no mention of his sacrifice or oblation of bread and wine, the cardinal pretends to give a reason of this omission, and it is this[n], "lest he should be forced to explain the mystery of the eucharist, which was too high for them." But it seems this mystery, which the Jews, who entertained Christianity, were not able to comprehend, is here revealed by Jesus in his discourse with this woman of Samaria, though the eucharist itself was not instituted or made known at that time.

4. It is plain that our Saviour does not speak of the quality of the sacrifice, but of the disposition of the worshippers: *The Father seeketh such to worship him*, ver. 23: *God is a Spirit:* and then it follows, *they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth.* The connexion is close; but where would the connexion be, if the cardinal's sense were admitted? q. d. "God is a Spirit, and therefore there must be offered to him the sacrifice of the mass," or a proper and continual sacrifice.

Fifthly, Whereas the cardinal would prove from those words, *the hour cometh, and now is*, that Jesus speaks of a new worship that was not known before, as spiritual sacrifices of praise, &c. were, and that therefore he speaks of a sacrifice properly so called; his discourse is very inconsequent, because when the New Testament requires and commends *circumcision*

[n] Bellarm. de Missa, l. 1. c. 6.

in the heart and spirit, it does not thence follow that such a circumcision was not required before. A spiritual worship God required of the Jews of old, when yet he required also an external and ritual one. That system of ceremonies is now destroyed, and God requires a spiritual worship free from such rites; such spiritual worshippers he seeks, and he being a Spirit will be worshipped in spirit. The cardinal's argument recoils upon him. If this worship which Jesus speaks of must be something that did not obtain before them, he ought not to interpret it of a proper and propitiatory sacrifice, because such sacrifices were in use before.

Lastly, For that pretence that this worship must be of the same nature and kind with the Jewish worship, because it was to succeed it, it is so far from being good reasoning, that the contrary may be rather inferred from it. It is certain that spiritual circumcision succeeds the carnal, and the unction with the Spirit that with oil. I might add, that the interpretation given of this place is not new. St. Chrysostom on the place gives the very same: he by *the true worshippers* understands spiritual, and quotes, as parallel places, Rom. i. 9, and chap. xii. 1.

The next scripture proof of the sacrifice of the mass, produced by cardinal Bellarmine[o], is taken from the institution and first celebration of this mystery, mentioned by St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Luke, as also by St. Paul, 1 Cor. xi.

This is indeed the most likely place to find something to this purpose, if there be any foundation in the holy scripture for the sacrifice of the mass. And therefore I shall diligently consider what he hath to offer on this occasion.

He affirms, "that Christ in his last supper offered himself, under the species of bread and wine, to God the Father, and required that the apostles and their successors should do the same to the end of the world." And this argument, could he make it good, we grant sufficient to prove the sacrifice of the mass. But how can it be proved that Christ offered himself up in the last supper, and commanded his apostles to repeat this sacrifice? Here he refers his reader to his first, second, and third scripture arguments, drawn from the priesthood of Melchizedek, the paschal lamb, and the blood of the covenant,

[o] De Missa, l. 1. c. 12.

Exod. xxiv. And I do also refer the reader to what hath been said before as to those pretences. He offers three other arguments: we will take them in the order in which he hath laid them before us.

The first is from those words of Christ, Luke xxii. 19, 20, *This is my body which is given for you:* to which he adds those in St. Paul, 1 Cor. xi. 24, *which is broken for you.* And, *This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you:* and St. Matthew adds, chap. xxvi. 28, *for the remission of sins.* "These words in the present tense, *is given, is broken, is shed,* do import a sacrifice given to God, not to the apostles to eat and drink, it not being said to be given *to,* but *for* them. Besides, in St. Matthew, this blood is said to be *shed for many,* the apostles only being then present. The meaning is, It is given for you, and for many, and it is offered to God as a sacrifice propitiatory for remission of sins." To this I answer,

1. That nothing is more common in the sacred writers than to put the present for the future tense, especially where the thing spoken of is certainly and suddenly to come to pass. It were easy to give many instances of this out of the Old and New Testament. From the Old, I refer the reader to the Hebrew text of Exod. xvi. 4, 5. and chap. xvii. 6; Gen. xv. 13. In the New Testament there are many instances to this purpose: *I lay down my life for the sheep,* says Jesus, John x. 15; i. e. *I will shortly lay it down:* see also ver. 17, 18: *I leave the world, and go unto the Father,* says our Saviour; i. e. *I am about to leave it,* John xvi. 28: again, he says, *And now I am no more in the world,* chap. xvii. 11; i. e. *I am about to leave it.* And though he had not yet left this lower world, yet because he was about to do it, he speaks of it as come to pass already: *While I was with them in the world, I kept them,* &c. ver. 12: *And now come I to thee,* ver. 13; i. e. *I am about to come: Woman,* says he, *thou art loosed from thine infirmity,* Luke xiii. 12; i. e. *thou shalt be presently loosed;* for it follows, that he laid his hands on her, and after this she was *immediately made straight,* ver. 13: *Whose coming is after the working of Satan,* says St. Paul of the wicked one, who was not yet revealed, 2 Thess. ii. 9, with ver. 6: *For I am offered,* (it is in the present tense in the Greek,) says St.

Paul, 2 Tim. iv. 6; i. e. *I am ready to be offered*, as we render it well: so that there is no such force in the cardinal's argument from the present tense; and though he thought good to make a flourish with it, yet ought he not to insist upon it.

2. Because the vulgar Latin, which the Romanists are bound not to reject, and their canon of the mass, read the words in the future tense, and consequently destroy all the force of his argument, and confirm our explication of the words: thus, what we render *which is shed for many*, Matt. xxvi 28, the Vulgar renders *qui pro multis effundetur*, i. e. *which shall be shed for many*. That version does so again, Mark xiv. 24. Again, it renders in the future tense Luke xxii. 20; and what we render, 1 Cor. xi. 24, *is broken*, the Vulgar renders by *tradetur*, i. e. *shall be delivered*; and the canon of the mass is conformable to the Vulgar in this matter. The cardinal was sensible of this difficulty, and would willingly get loose from it: he finds out a compromise, and admits both readings, and that of the present tense he refers to our Lord's supper, the future to the sacrifice of the cross, which was shortly to follow, and the sacrifice of the mass, which the church should offer up to the end of the world. But this is but a mere invention, and that which he is so far from making any proof of, that it is nothing less than a begging of the question. If with the Vulgar and canon of the mass we read in the future, *shall be shed*, i. e. *on the cross;* can it thence be inferred that it was shed in the supper? And if we read in the present, *is shed*, does it follow from thence that it must be shed on the cross also? Surely Christ died but once: and must his blood be twice shed? The mass is an unbloody sacrifice; but how can that be, if the blood were shed in the supper, and is to be shed in the mass? The vulgar Latin is to be adhered to, or not: if not, we must renounce the declaration of the Tridentine fathers, and indeed of the Roman church: if it be to be adhered to, where lies the fault of protestants in understanding those words in that sense into which that version renders them? I appeal to the conscience of any indifferent man in this case.

3. If we consider how closely the death of Christ followed upon his supper, the difficulty will be removed presently.

That may be said to be done which was doing. The present time is not always strictly to be confined to a moment. Jesus was just entering upon his last sufferings, his bloody sweat and crucifixion were just at hand: no wonder his blood should be said to be shed, which was just ready to be shed: it was done on the same day with the evening of the supper. We say in common speech of a man that is just a dying, that he is a dead man; of one that is just breaking, that he is an undone man; of a victory almost obtained, that it is gained; of a prize of which we have no hope, that it is lost.

The second argument which the cardinal produceth to prove that Christ in his last supper offered himself a sacrifice, is from the true presence of the body and blood of Christ in that supper, which are received as the flesh and blood of a victim offered for us. This presence, he says, the Lutherans allow; and that the Calvinists would do it, did they not resist the plainest testimonies of holy writ. To which I answer,

1. That whatever the Lutherans hold, it is plain that they believe not the doctrine of the church of Rome concerning the sacrifice of the mass, and consequently, that they cannot be supposed to hold any doctrine which manifestly infers the sacrifice of the mass. But be that as it will, I am not concerned in that question at present.

2. That for the Calvinists resisting the plainest testimonies of scripture, it is easily charged upon them indeed; but as it is against their avowed principles so to do upon other occasions, so it can never be made good against them in the present question. It is true, they do reject the Romanists' sense and interpretation of some scriptures produced by them; but this is no proof that they reject the plainest evidence from those holy books. And there is no reason why the cardinal should charge them so severely, when he, and others of the church of Rome of great name, have owned that the corporal presence in the sacrament, as taught in their church, or their doctrine of transubstantiation, cannot be plainly proved from any text of holy scripture.

3. That though we believe not Christ's corporal presence in the sacrament with the church of Rome, yet we believe him truly present to the souls of the faithful, who come prepared, and in the fruits of his death and passion. But such a real

presence as this, is far from being any support to the sacrifice of the mass.

The third argument which the cardinal produceth, being from the testimony of the Fathers, I pass by, because it is foreign to my present business. And for that reason, and that alone, I pass it by. Besides, that it is very well known, that the pretence of the Fathers' testimony in this matter hath been strictly examined by several of our learned men, to whom therefore I refer the reader.

I shall, before I dismiss this argument, shew that the institution of the Lord's supper, as delivered to us in the Evangelists, and St. Paul, is so far from proving the Romish doctrine of the sacrifice of the mass, that it overthrows it.

There is nothing in the first institution that speaks a proper sacrifice; for besides that neither in the words of institution (or anywhere else in all the New Testament) is the eucharist called *a sacrifice*; so is there no intimation of any altar on which it was offered, which is required where there is a proper sacrifice. Instead of that, it was instituted and celebrated in a guestchamber, and at a table, and after supper[p]; besides, here is no visible or sensible victim, which yet Bellarmine requires in a proper sacrifice. No sense can perceive it, nor can we believe it till we renounce our senses first. And to say that is sensible which no sense can perceive, is no better than downright nonsense. It is easy to say that Christ's body lay hid under the species of bread; but we have no intimation of this from the institution of the Lord's supper. Besides, this would be so far from rendering the victim visible and sensible, that it would hide it from our eyes. And whereas in a proper sacrifice, a destruction and great change of the victim is necessary; in the last supper there is no such thing. If we believe there was, we must do it upon the bare word of the church of Rome. There was no shadow or proof from the institution itself. Let them prove when this change was wrought, and by what action or words it was effected; or, at least, that it was wrought. If it were a proper sacrifice, the victim must be destroyed; this the cardinal makes an essential of a proper sacrifice: was this destruction effected when Jesus eat and

[p] Luke xxii. 11.

drank? or when his disciples did? That Jesus did eat and drink at all of this supper, appears not from the express words of institution in the evangelists, and therefore cannot be urged from the institution. But supposing that he did eat and drink, he did it before those words, *This is my body*, &c. and *This is my blood*, &c., or afterwards. If before, then it was bread that he did eat, and wine that he drank: if afterwards, yet we find no such thing said: besides, the evangelists mention nothing between his blessing and breaking of bread, and giving it to his disciples. Nay, so far are we from receiving any proof that Jesus did eat and drink of this supper, after those words, *This is my body*, &c. and *This is my blood*, &c., that a man might rather conclude from St. Mark, that the disciples did drink of the cup before those words, *This is my blood*, &c., were pronounced. He mentions their drinking of it first, and then our Saviour's words, *This is my blood*, &c.: his words are these, Mark xiv. 23, 24, *And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them; and they all drank of it.* Then it follows, *And he said unto them, This is my blood*, &c. That the destruction of the victim was not effected by the eating of the apostles, the church of Rome cannot deny: the communicants' receiving makes no change: besides, that church, among a great many other mysteries, hath a way of celebrating the communion without communicants.

A sacrifice is given to God alone; but in this supper here is no oblation made to God; what is given, is given to the apostles. *Jesus took bread*, &c. *and gave it to his disciples*, Matt. xxvi. 26; *He took the cup*, &c. *and gave it to them*, ver. 27. To them he speaks, when he says, *Take, eat:* to them, when he says, *Drink ye all of it:* to them, when he says, *This is my body*, &c., and *This is my blood*, &c. He first bids them *eat* and *drink*, and then afterwards tells them, *This is my body*, &c. and *This is my blood*, &c. Here is no mention made of any sacrifice; so far from that, that it is plain there was no such thing intended. If this were a sacrifice to God, it would not have been given to men; they could have no share in it till God had been first served. This was against the order of things, to receive that which was due to God alone, and to partake of the victim before it had been offered at the altar. We have no external rites or actions in the institution that

speak a proper sacrifice; but the whole of it loudly speaks the contrary.

Nor will those words, *This is my body*, help out those of the church of Rome. For though some of that church make great use of those words among the ignorant sort of people, and upon occasion produce them in their writings as an argument for transubstantiation and sacrifice of the mass, yet they will not rely upon them: and if we would but consider the words strictly, we should soon find that they are so far from making for those doctrines, that they make against them. I shall go over them with great brevity, and then let the reader judge whether they are a proof of those doctrines or not. I begin with

This. If by *this* be meant *this bread*, here will be no strength to be had from it for supporting those doctrines of the church of Rome: and by *this* must be meant Christ's body, or bread, or nothing at all. To say that by *this*, Christ meant his body, is to suppose him to say, that his body is his body; but if he said that this bread was his body, then is not our protestant interpretation of the words to be rejected, nor the sense of the Romanists to be admitted. And that by *this*, our Saviour meant this bread, is infinitely plain to any that are unprejudiced. What did he *take?* The text tells us[q], that he *took bread;* what he took, he also blessed, and brake, and gave; of this he said, *Take, eat*, and then adds, *This is my body*. This will be put out of doubt, if by the following *this*, in those words, *this is my blood*, by *this* be meant *this cup*, no reason can be assigned why *this*, Matt. xxvi. 26, should not denote *this bread*, if *this*, ver. 28, denote *this cup*. It is true, St. Matthew and St. Mark, having mentioned the cup which Jesus took and blessed, and gave, tell us that Jesus said, *This is my blood*[r]: and though it be plain from what goes before, that by *this*, is meant *this cup*, yet we have further proof of it still: for whereas St. Matthew and St. Mark say only *this*, St. Luke and St. Paul say *this cup*. And having this warrant by *this* in the latter words to understand *this cup*, where lies the blame, when by *this* in the former we understand *this bread?* I proceed:

q Matt. xxvi. 26, with ver. 28. Luke xxii. 20. and 1 Cor. x. 16. and
r Matt. xxvi. 28. Mark xiv. 24. with chap. xi. 26, 27, 28.

Is. This verb is interpretable according to the subject-matter: but where it is used of a sacrament, and joins the sign and thing signified together, and where another sense contended for is destructive to our senses, and against reason, and other scripture, it is reasonable to understand it to import the same with the word *signifieth*; and that is the present case. Nor is there any more common than this way of speaking in the holy scriptures, in other authors, and common conversation. This verb here cannot be understood in the sense of the church of Rome, as implying transubstantiation and the sacrifice of the mass; because that change of substance they speak of is not effected till these words, *This is my body*, are fully pronounced; and therefore this not being effected till the last syllable be pronounced, (according to our adversaries,) it cannot be said to *be* before it hath received its *being*. The pronunciation of the words must be precedent to the being of the thing; and therefore cannot be true before they are fully pronounced. According to our adversaries, the real presence of Christ in the sacrament (which they contend for) must be the cause and effect of the truth of this proposition, *This is my body*. If their doctrine be not true, the proposition is false in the sense they take it in. Again, if their doctrine be true, the proposition pronounced by a priest makes it so. And whereas elsewhere the existence of a thing makes good the proposition; here the proposition makes good the thing.

My body. By his body, our Lord must mean what was known to be so, and what had the properties of an human body. The disciples[s] were gross, and apt enough to take spiritual things in a carnal sense, when the letter gave them any occasion so to do. They had not so quick an apprehension as to conquer all the difficulties of the Romish doctrine. They could not comprehend the miracles said to be wrought by the words of consecration. They were not easily convinced that Christ was risen from the dead, even after many proofs of it, and predictions to that purpose. It is not to be imagined that they would eat human flesh, and drink blood; and believe Jesus sacrificed, and alive at the same time; and at the same time entire, and yet consumed: and eaten entirely by each of them, and in every the least crumb of bread that was taken.

[s] Matt. xvi. 6, 11, 12. John iv. 32, 33.

The next place produced by cardinal Bellarmine for proof of the doctrine of the church of Rome, concerning the sacrifice of the mass, is Acts xiii. 2, *As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said*, &c.; where by *ministering* must be meant *sacrificing*, and that must be understood of the sacrifice of the mass. I shall, before I sum up what the cardinal produceth from hence for proof of the doctrine of the Roman church in this matter, lay before the reader the annotation of the Rhemists upon these words. And their words are these: "If we should, as our adversaries do, boldly turn what text we list, and flee from one language to another for the advantage of our cause, we might have translated for *ministering, sacrificing*; for so the Greek doth signify, and so Erasmus translated; yea, we might have translated, saying mass; for so they did. And the Greek fathers hereof had their name *Liturgy*, which Erasmus translateth *mass*; saying, *missa Chrysostomi*. But we keep our text, as the translators of the scriptures should do, most religiously." I was much surprised when I first read this annotation: for it is so far from proving what it is produced for, that it is inconsistent with itself, and is an argument of a bad cause. For I would fain know what harm there is in "fleeing from one language to another for the advantage of our cause," whilst we flee from a translation to the original text? I would know for what reason he can be charged with "boldly turning the text as he listeth," who should turn it into what it really signifies, and in that place? If the Greek word signify *sacrificing* and *saying mass*, why might they not have turned it so? Had it been a fault to have translated truly? Erasmus did well in his version, or he did amiss: if he did amiss, to what purpose is his authority produced here? if he did well, why should they fear to do like him? If this text proves the sacrifice of the mass, it does so either as we have it in the Vulgar Latin, or as it is in the Greek. The Vulgar renders the word as we do, *ministering*, and that is so far from denoting the sacrifice of the mass, that it does not so much as insinuate any sacrifice at all. If it have any force then for proving their doctrine, it must be from the Greek; and these men lay it there: but then I would know, if they do not "flee from one language to another for the advantage of their cause?" And

then they blame what themselves practise; and their meaning must be this, that they would not have us flee from one language to another, though they do it in the mean time. These men pretend indeed great religion and sanctity: "We keep our text (say they) as the translators of the scriptures should do, most religiously." If by keeping the text, they mean the vulgar Latin, much good may it do them: let them keep here as close to it as they can; if they do, they will never find any proof of the sacrifice of the mass. There are others of the church of Rome, who, it seems, have not kept to the text religiously, as these pretend to do. Erasmus could not say he did it, when he used the word *sacrificing*. Menochius[t] the Jesuit did not keep the text, when he interprets the Greek word by *sacrificantibus*. And the publishers of the Mons Testament[u] did "boldly turn as they list, and flee from one language to another for the advantage of their cause," when they render *as they sacrificed*.

But I return to cardinal Bellarmine[x], and sum up what he hath to say from this text for the proof of the sacrifice of the mass. And thus it is: That the ministry or service exhibited to the Lord here[y], "does not seem possible to be any thing else than a sacrifice, and the sacrifice of the mass;" and that because there is this sacrifice in the church, or there is none at all. He endeavours to confirm what he says, 1. from the Greek word, which (he says) is granted to import a public (not private) ministry, and therefore an external. Nor can it signify the ministry of the word and sacraments, because that service, though public, yet is not performed unto God, to whom we neither preach, nor dispense the sacraments. For though these things may be said to be for the honour of God, yet if for that reason St. Luke had thus expressed himself, he would not have added, *and fasted*. For fasting in that sense is for the honour of God, Rom. xiv. 6. 2. Because the Greek word λειτουργέω, though it may be accommodated to sacred and profane services, yet when it is applied to *sacred*, and absolutely used in the scriptures, it is always taken for the service rendered by sacrifice. For proof of this, he refers the

[t] Menoch. in Act. xiii. 2.

[u] Qu'ils sacrifioient. Nov. Test. à Mons, 1672.

[x] Bellarm. de Sacr. Miss. l. 1. c. 13.

[y] Non videtur aliud esse potuisse quam sacerdotium et sacrificium missæ.

reader to Luke i. and Heb. xi. 8, 9, 10. To this he adds the version of Erasmus, and that the Greeks call the celebration of the mass Λειτουργίαν.

Before I answer these pretences of the cardinal's, I shall premise two things:

First, That the cardinal is not of the mind with the Rhemists; he thinks it very convenient to "flee from one language to another for the advantage of his cause." He lays not the stress upon the Latin, but Greek word; in which he shewed much greater judgment than is to be found in the Rhemish annotation.

Secondly, As to the importance of the Greek word, there is a great difference between the Rhemists and the cardinal. They say they might have translated the Greek word *sacrificing*, or *saying mass*. The first, they say, the word signifies; the latter was practised here. But who told them that the Greek word signifies *to sacrifice?* Their vulgar Latin renders it by *ministering*[z]. It would have been some support to their cause, or they would have thought it so, had it been in that ancient version rendered by *sacrificing*. To pretend that the Greek word signifies *to sacrifice*, is an argument of great impudence or ignorance. We have another account[a] from those who well understand this matter. They tell us that it signifies *to toil*, and *to serve*, and denotes some public ministry or service[b]. But cardinal Bellarmine hath more modesty and learning than to pretend to affirm that the word signifies *to sacrifice*. That it imports a public ministry or service, he and we are agreed in. He says of Erasmus, *vertere ausus est*, that he was so hardy as to turn the Greek word by the Latin signifying *sacrificing*. But he commends him not for it, and mentions it as an argument *ad hominem*, against those men who had an esteem for him. I now proceed to answer the cardinal.

First, There is no need that we understand this *ministering* of a proper sacrifice, or else of the ministry of the word and sacraments; because it may be understood of the public prayers of the church. Thus the Syriac version does. And prayer

z Ministrantibus autem illis V. L.

a Λειτουργεῖν, μοχθεῖν, δουλεύειν, Hesychius.

b Λειτουργία κυρίως, ἡ δημοσία ὑπηρ. ησία, Suid.

and fasting are often joined together: and in the very next words it is said, *And when they had fasted and prayed*, &c. (verse 3.) Prayers are offered to God; and, admitting this sense, the cardinal's way of arguing is spoiled. For though we do not preach, or minister the sacraments to God, yet we offer our prayers to him.

Secondly, That preaching the word however is not by this excluded: it may well be called *ministering to the Lord*[c]. He that does it exerciseth his charge and function, and helps to prepare and make ready a people for the Lord. Both Chrysostom and Theophylact on this place expound what we render *ministering*, by *preaching*. And cardinal Cajetan upon the place[d] speaks to the same purpose: "The kind of ministry is not explained," says he, "but because doctors and prophets are mentioned, it is insinuated that they ministered to the Lord, *docendo et prophetando*, i. e. by teaching and prophesying."

Thirdly, That for the import of the Greek word we are contented to be determined by the scripture use of it in the Old Testament, where the LXXII. make use of it, and in the New. In the New Testament, it is far from being restrained to sacrificing: their vulgar Latin, as hath been observed, renders it by *ministrantibus*, i. e. *ministering*, in this place. And elsewhere it represents the ministry of princes, Rom. xiii. 6. and that of angels, Heb. i. 14, and that of almsgiving to the poor, (which is but improperly a sacrifice,) 2 Cor. ix. 12. And when it is applied to sacrifice, it appears from the subject-matter so to be. For the Old Testament, it is by the LXXII. made use of frequently; and it is used to interpret the Hebrew עבדה, which signifies *service* or *ministry* in general, and is accordingly rendered by the vulgar Latin *ministerium et officium*. And it is so far from being restrained to the office of sacrificing priests, that it is used very commonly and frequently to express the office or ministry of the Levites. For the truth of which, I refer the reader to the following texts in the LXXII. interpreters: Numb. iv. 24, 28, and vii. 5, and viii. 22, 25, and xvi. 9, and xviii. 6; 1 Chron. vi. 32.

Fourthly, Nor is there any shadow for understanding this

[c] Τι ἐστι λειτουργοῦντων τοῦτ' ἐστι κηρυττόντων. [d] Cajetan. in Act. xiii. 2.

place of a proper sacrifice. Here is no mention of sacrificing priests, but express mention of prophets and doctors. They are said to be ministering to the Lord, or to Christ, as it is probable the words import; but that sense will not agree with offering to him the sacrifice of himself. The fasting also that follows agrees well with prayer, but not with a proper sacrifice, which was generally attended with a feast or banquet upon it.

The next argument from scripture for the sacrifice of the mass, produced by cardinal Bellarmine[c], is taken from 1 Cor. x. 14—21. *Flee from idolatry. I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread. Behold Israel after the flesh: are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar? What say I then? that the idol is any thing, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is any thing? But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils.* From these words Bellarmine collects three arguments for the sacrifice of the mass.

First, From this, that St. Paul compares the Lord's table with the altars of the Gentiles and of the Jews; whence he infers, that the Lord's table is an altar, and consequently that the eucharist is a sacrifice.

Secondly, Because the apostle compares the eucharist with the sacrifices of the heathens and of the Jews; and thence he infers that the eucharist must be a sacrifice.

Thirdly, Because he compares the communion of them who receive the eucharist, with that communion which the Gentiles have with their idols in partaking with their altars; whence he infers that the eucharist must be a sacrifice.

To this I answer,

First, That St. Paul does not compare the Lord's table with the altars, but with the tables of the Jews and of the

[c] De Missa, l. 1. c. 14.

heathens, where they did eat the remainder of the sacrifices which were offered at the altar. It is certain that the Jews had but one altar for sacrifices, and that not built after a table fashion, and so placed, that the Jewish people might not be admitted to it to eat upon it. And for the Gentiles, it is certain that St. Paul speaks here of the tables on which they eat the remainder of their sacrifices; *Ye cannot*, says he, *be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils*[f]. This Lord's table is nowhere called an *altar*, nor the eucharist a *sacrifice* in any part of scripture. And though Haymo and other grave authors think the Lord's table called an *altar*[g], yet the cardinal is so wise as not to urge it, as he tells us, when he mentions their opinion. And though it should be compared with an altar, it follows not hence that it was an altar, no more than it follows that the gospel is leaven, or the church a woman, or Jesus a vine, because compared with such things.

Secondly, For the second comparison between the eucharist with the sacrifices of the Jews and Gentiles, it will not serve the cardinal's purpose. For be it so, that we receive from the Lord's table the body and blood of Christ, as the Jews received their victims, and the heathens their *idolothyta* from their altars or tables; this will not infer the sacrifice of the mass. It is confessed, that they that eat the eucharist have communion with the body and blood of Christ, as those Jews who did eat the sacrifice did partake of the altar, and the heathens that did eat the *idolothyta* had communion with devils. But shall we conclude from hence, that the Jews did eat up the altar, and the pagans did eat up the devils? For so we may, as well as we do infer, that Christians sacrifice the very body of Christ, because the bread which we break is said to be the *communion*, or *communication of the body of Christ*.

Thirdly, That allowing that St. Paul compares the communion we have with Christ by the eucharist, with the communion the heathens had with devils by eating the *idolothyta*, it follows not thence, that the eucharist is a sacrifice in that sense which the Romanists contend for: this should have been proved by the cardinal.

Upon the whole matter, these words of St. Paul are so far

[f] 1 Cor. x. 21. [g] Heb. xiii. 10.

from proving the sacrifice of the mass, as taught in the Romish church, that they afford arguments against it; viz.

1. Be it that the communion the faithful have with God in the eucharist be compared with that communion which the Jews have with the altar, and the heathens with devils; this will be so far from proving the Romish doctrine of the sacrifice of the mass, that it makes against it. For with the same reason the cardinal does from this comparison conclude the eucharist to be a sacrifice, I may infer also, that it is not a proper one, and that the natural flesh and blood are not in it. The other communions with the altar and with devils are not to be understood corporeally and substantially; and why then should the communion of Christ's body and blood be understood in so gross a sense? The Jew that partook of the altar did not eat the very altar; the heathen that eat the *idolothyta*, with conscience of the idol, had fellowship with the Devil; but this is still to be understood in a moral and spiritual sense. The Jew received of the benefits of the altar, and did, by his partaking, declare himself of the Jewish religion. The heathen did also, by partaking, do an act of worship, and thereby acknowledge himself a worshipper of the Devil. And he that eats the eucharist does thereby profess himself a Christian, and reap the benefits of Christ's death and suffering.

2. The eating of the eucharist is expressed by partaking of the bread, ver. 17. That expression makes against the Romish doctrine, which teacheth that the natural substance is changed; besides, that in the other manducations there is no transubstantiation; none where the Jew is said, when he did eat the sacrifice, to partake of the altar; nor yet when the heathen is said to have fellowship with devils, when he partakes of their tables: and therefore there is no reason that we should here fancy a transubstantiation, nor consequently the sacrifice of the mass.

It is expressly said, that what we eat and drink in the eucharist is bread and wine; and if it be so, this destroys the Romish doctrine of the sacrifice of the mass. In the institution our Lord is said to have taken bread, &c.: hence the eucharist is expressed by *breaking of bread*, Acts ii. 42, 46; chap. xx. 7. And in this chapter it is so called three times, ver. 16, 17, and in the following it is so called three times, 1 Cor. xi. 26—28:

and, which is very remarkable, when the apostle reproves their irreverent and indevout partaking of the eucharist, and where he had the fairest occasion of acquainting them with the mystery of transubstantiation, had that doctrine been true. Once indeed our Saviour said, *This is my body*, and but once: but it is expressly called *bread* nine or ten times. *The bread which we break*, says St. Paul. The natural body of Christ is not broken, and to interpret *breaking* by *immolation* is without authority and reason. It is bread still, if we believe our sense or the scripture, where it is frequently so called after consecration, and where we are said to partake *of that one bread*, ver. 17, and to eat *this bread*, 1 Cor. xi. 26—28.

3. It appears that the apostle here does not compare the eucharist with the Jewish or Gentile sacrifices, (upon which supposition the cardinal grounds his second argument,) but with the feasts or banquets which they made upon the remainder of the sacrifice. Hence it is that he calls it the *Lord's table*, not *altar;* and the *table*, not *altar* of devils, ver. 21. The sacrifice was offered by a priest, and upon an altar; the feast upon it was eaten by the people, and on a table. The Corinthians knew it was not lawful to sacrifice to devils; all the question was, whether they might not eat of the remainder of those sacrifices. The apostle here dissuades them from it, from the eucharist, and the relation that hath to our Lord Jesus Christ, that from that they might judge of the relation which the table of devils hath to devils. Hence they might learn, that as they who partake of the Lord's table have fellowship with Christ, so they who partake of the devils' table have fellowship with devils.

He also makes use of another argument, and that was a parallel rite among the Jews. [h] *Behold Israel after the flesh, are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar?* For the more fully comprehending this whole matter, it is to be considered to my present purpose, that among the Jews there were three sorts of sacrifices.

First, some which no man was permitted to eat any part of, such were the holocaust, and those sin offerings, the blood whereof was to be carried into the holy place [i]. The fat, kidneys, and caul of these were burnt on the altar of brass,

[h] Levit. i. 9; 1 Sam. vii. 9. [i] Levit. i. 4; ch. vi. 30; x. 28; xvi. 27.

the skin and flesh without the camp, and when the temple was built, without the city. These were types of Christ, who suffered without the gate. The adherers to that law, all the legal eaters [k], are excluded from partaking of him according to the principles of their own law, the people not being permitted to partake of such sacrifices.

Secondly, some the priests did only eat of [l], and that they were not permitted to do every where, but in an holy place. These sacrifices were called *most holy*.

Thirdly, some were less holy: these the priests were not only permitted to eat of, but their children and servants, and the offerers were also permitted to eat part of them too; such were the peace offerings [m]: these were sometimes to be eaten the same day they were offered; and therefore not to be eaten by the offerer alone [n], but by him and his friends or kindred, or whomsoever of the same religion he thought fit to invite to the feast or banquet, which was made of the remainder of the sacrifice [o]. This eating part of the sacrifice is frequently mentioned as a rite belonging to that service, and an acknowledgment of that religion which was professed where that rite obtained: Exod. xxiv. 15; Numbers xxv. 2; Psalm cvi. 28; Exod. xviii. 12. and chap. xxxii; 1 Sam. iii. Of the remainders of these sacrifices the apostle must be understood, ver. 18. The people were admitted to no other; it was never lawful for them to sacrifice; what they eat was no more but a feast upon a sacrifice. This which they were admitted to eat, they did not offer anew to God; it was a meal or feast, a portion allowed them out of what they had brought. This will be far enough from proving the sacrifice of the mass, though it helps us to understand the nature of the eucharist, as it is a feast upon a sacrifice, and the efficacy of the sacrifice of the cross, of which the eucharist is the memorial.

Moses required expiatory sacrifices, interdicted the offerer to eat any part of it, and forbad blood to all Israel. This spake the imperfection of these sacrifices, and that they were not to be relied upon; they were consumed on the altar to the Divine justice and will, no portion was allowed to the offerer

[k] Heb. xiii. 10.
[l] Levit. vi. 26; x. 17; vii. 6.
[m] Levit. xxii. 10, 11; ch. x. 14.
[n] Deut. xxvii. 7; 1 Sam. xi. 15; ch. i. 4.
[o] Levit. vii. 15. and xxii. 29.

as a token of God's favour. They had not so much efficacy with God; it is otherwise now. The sacrifice of the cross hath made abundant atonement, and satisfied the Divine justice: we are allowed to feast upon this precious victim, and to rejoice in the saving virtue of Christ's death. The legal offerer brought his sacrifice, imparted his crime to it, it died in his stead. This was all he had to do with it. It came not back from the altar: he eat no part of it. He imparted death to the beast, that imparted not life nor nourishment to him back again. Our Lord made expiation by his death, and gives us spiritual nourishment in his holy sacrament. But then to suppose him offered again, is to suppose him to suffer more than once, and consequently to deny the sufficiency of the sacrifice he offered on the cross.

From what hath been said, the unprejudiced reader, and sincere lover of truth, will easily discern that the scriptures will afford no proof for the doctrine of the Roman church concerning the sacrifice of the mass.

A DISCOURSE

CONCERNING

THE WORSHIP

OF

THE BLESSED VIRGIN

AND

THE SAINTS:

WITH

AN ACCOUNT OF THE BEGINNINGS AND RISE OF IT AMONGST CHRISTIANS, IN ANSWER TO M. DE MEAUX'S APPEAL TO THE FOURTH AGE, IN HIS EXPOSITION AND PASTORAL LETTER.

SECT. I.

THE gentlemen of the church of Rome have been pleased lately to send books amongst us of a very different strain; on the one side, "Popery misrepresented and represented," but especially monsieur de M.'s Exposition of the Roman doctrine; on the other side, "Our Lady's Rosary, and the Contemplation of her Life and Glory," &c. which go up and down, though not so openly, as the other. And we believe they have books in readiness to explain over again their meaning in the other articles, (treated of in the Exposition,) at the same rate that their books of particular devotion to our Lady do explain the articles of religious worship, and invocation of saints.

In the mean time they seem to believe that there are no articles will bear a representation in their true colours sooner or better than these. And the truth is, as mankind has in all ages been very prone to superstition, so to no kind of it more than to that of worshipping dead men and women; which being the practice they would reconcile us to, in the first place, we are

concerned the more throughly to examine what they now think fit to say for it.

But let no man think, that in this cause we are engaged against the saints departed, because we contend with their worshippers. Let no man take our refusal to honour them as their worshippers honour them, for an argument that we do not honour them at all. We are content to be tried by that known rule of St. Austin, that "they are to be honoured for imitation, not to be adored for religion." We believe that the highest honour we can do them is to follow their examples: we love their memories; we celebrate anniversary commemorations of their piety and virtues, especially of their sufferings for righteousness' sake; we congratulate their victories over the world; we rejoice in their glory and happiness; we propound their examples to the imitation of the faithful, exciting them to live as the saints once lived, that they at length may inherit those *promises*, which, *by their faith and patience* in this world, the saints now inherit in the other; we praise God for them as often as we meet together at the holy table of our Lord; and when we meet to inter our Christian brethren, we pray to God "to hasten his kingdom, that we, with all those that are departed in the true faith of his holy name, may have our perfect consummation and bliss, both in body and soul, in his everlasting glory."

Thus we honour the departed saints, remembering all along, that though they are highly exalted above us, who are here below imprisoned in earthly bodies, and struggling in a sinful world with infirmities and temptations; we yet belong to the same body of which they are members, and that they are still our fellow-servants. We are persuaded they have not less, but rather more charity for us than they had for the church, when they lived upon the earth; but whether they know us in particular or not, or in what instances they express their charity towards us, God having made no revelations of these things, we can define nothing about them: and therefore we dare not give them those honours, which suppose such an assurance of these things as God hath thought fit to deny us.

As to the Virgin Mary in particular, we do with men and angels acknowledge that she was *blessed amongst women*, since she brought forth the Saviour of mankind and the Lord of

heaven and earth: since she was not the mother only, but the virgin mother also of our Lord, and conceived him by the power of the Holy Ghost. Which confession so honourable to her, being inseparable from a right belief concerning our Lord Jesus, we do not only set it forth upon the anniversary of the annunciation, but frequently also in our sermons, and daily in the Creed. Moreover, we take these singular graces of God towards her, in conjunction with other things of a more common quality: we doubt not but she was an excellently pious and virtuous person. We see by her behaviour, when the angel Gabriel [a] came to her, that she was not apt to be imposed upon by counterfeit visions and revelations, nor forward to believe great things of herself, nor lifted up with pride, because she was so highly favoured; but that upon this extraordinary occasion, she wholly resigned herself to the disposal of God, with a wisdom and humility that could not but be habitual. But if nothing at all had been said of her personal qualities in the scriptures, (as indeed there is but very little,) we might have presumed without rashness, that because God (who has no less regard to a holy mind than to a pure body) would have the mother of our Lord to retain the purity of a virgin, he would also choose a most holy virgin to be his mother; and since he was pleased to send us so heavenly a treasure in an earthen vessel, he would choose one of the greatest honour. For which reason likewise we might have concluded, without other testimony, that she became afterwards a faithful disciple of her Son. For when one, in admiration of him, cried out, *Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps that gave thee suck. Yea rather*, said he, *blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it:* without which blessedness, she that bore him in her womb, and nourished him at her breasts, would have been justly esteemed by all generations the most unhappy and miserable creature in the world. Finally, from all this we cannot but conclude, that she is very happy and glorious in the kingdom of heaven. For though we have no particular revelations concerning this, to warrant any comparisons of her state with that of angels and archangels, yet upon general reasons we may say with sufficient assurance, that her rewards and glories in heaven are exceeding great,

[a] Luke i.

and such as hold proportion, not only with her faith and patience, (for as some think she suffered martyrdom,) but likewise with that honour, which God was pleased to confer upon her in this world.

Now if any thing remains, whereby to express the tenderness we have for the honour of the blessed Virgin, it is this, that we should do what we can to redeem her name from that dishonourable imputation of affecting glories that cannot belong to the most excellent creature, that is but a creature: for they who, by most solemn rites of religious service, address to her, as to the "queen of heaven and earth," would make us believe, and pretend to believe themselves, that she is pleased with that worship which they offer to her. But if, as we say, they yield to her those services which no creature is to receive, they do by consequence represent her as a lady that aspires to the glory of the Most High; which is by no means for the glory of the blessed Virgin. And if their saint-worship be liable to the same charge, thus also they represent the other saints. Now though, in opposing their doctrine and practice, we are principally moved by that concern we ought to have for the glory of our Creator and Saviour; yet it is some inducement to us so to do, that we shall thereby vindicate the blessed Virgin also, and all the glorified saints. For if she knows what passes amongst mortals, she cannot but be displeased at those services that have been and still are paid to her by some of her Son's disciples; and if she said any thing at all to them, she should say to her votaries, but with greater indignation, what the angel said to St. John, falling at his feet to worship him; [b] *See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant—worship God.*

The same I say of the angels, the apostles, the martyrs, and all the saints, whom they honour with the same kind of worship that they give to the blessed Virgin. Only the degree of her worship, and the frequency of their addresses to her, and the strength of their confidence in her, is so much greater, that they have thought fit to invent a word of art to express it by; *hyperdulia* they call it: a word which our people cannot understand better, than by knowing the practice which it is a name for.

[b] Rev. xix. 10.

It is so vast a proportion of religious service which they render to her; it consists of so many parts and diversities, that it were a labour to recount them as particularly as the case would bear. It shall suffice to mention some of the principal heads. They worship her with religious prayers and vows: they erect churches and oratories for her service; where they worship her very images and pictures and pretended relics: they make rosaries, and compose hours, psalters, and other forms of devotion to her: they ask things of her that are proper to be asked of God only: they burn incense to her images, and offer their very sacrifice of the mass in her honour.

Now as to this, and all the rest, we cannot but stand amazed, that this service of the blessed Virgin should grow to be one of the principal parts of their religion; when the holy scriptures have not given us the least intimation of rule or example for it, or of any doctrine or practice that leads to it. That it should be a main design of their Catechisms to instruct youth in the worship of the blessed Virgin; of their sermons to excite the people to put confidence in her, and to call upon her for the present occasion; of their books of devotion to direct them how to pray to her, and magnify her in formal invocations; of their confessors to enjoin penitents to say so many Ave Maries, in satisfaction for their sins, and to make at least as frequent applications to Mary as to Jesus himself for deliverance from sins and dangers: when not one word, not one intimation of any thing, like to any thing of all this, is left upon record in the writings of the evangelists and apostles; from whom those men pretend to derive their religion, whose books are large enough for this so famous a service, to have been at least mentioned somewhere or other; and who, without all doubt, would have more than mentioned it, if it had been the religion of those times. This is that we must always wonder at, and so much the more, because the constant tenor of the holy scriptures bears against such practices as these, agreeably to that precept of both Testaments, *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.*

And indeed our reasons to keep at a distance from this worship of the blessed Virgin and the saints, are so obvious and commonly known, that I shall not make it a business by

itself to represent them. But these two things I shall consider as well as I can:

1. The plausible expositions and colours by which they have tried of late to justify themselves in these things.

2. What were the beginnings of this kind of worship amongst Christians, and by what steps it is grown to that height in which we now see it. I shall consider the former in a narrow compass, because much has been said to it already. The latter is what I chiefly design.

SECT. II.

In pursuance of the first thing propounded, I shall particularly observe how monsieur de Meaux hath expounded these matters, under the heads of religious worship, of invocation of saints, and giving honour to images and relics: but I shall begin with the two latter, because he expounds these particularly; and then I shall consider the general defence he makes for all the religious worship they give to the blessed Virgin and to the saints.

The worship of invocation is the foundation of a great many other things done in her service: for instance, it is this that hath brought forth the rosary, the psalters, the hours, and all other offices of devotion to her. It is this that hath raised her shrines, and built oratories and chapels for her especial service. And indeed, if she as well as God is to be worshipped with prayers and hymns, it is but reasonable that she should have her holy places for such services, as well as God. And yet St. Austin[c] thought the "erecting of temples to be so proper an act of Divine worship, that if we should do it to the most excellent angel, we should be anathematized from the church of God:" whereas therefore our churches are known from one another in cities and populous towns, by the names of several saints; yet we profess, that however for distinction sake they are so called, they are God's houses and oratories, and not theirs; and it is most manifest, that they are used by us for his worship, and not for theirs in whole or in part.

The invocation of the blessed Virgin and the saints has run out into some excesses from which they might have separated it; and therefore to these excesses I shall say but little, espe-

[c] Cont. Maxim. Arian. lib. 1. c. 11.

cially because they defend them very faintly, and with great appearances of self-condemnation.

It was too much in all reason that the council of Trent[d] allowed of mental as well as vocal prayers to be made to the saints; for this ascribes to them the knowledge of the secrets of hearts. And it is a very faint plea for this which monsieur de Meaux[e] makes in saying, that "God did not disdain to discover future things to the prophets, though they appear much more particularly reserved to his own knowledge." For this does not clear mental praying to the saints from the consequence we charge it with, unless they were sure that as God discovered some future things to the prophets, so he does also perpetually reveal the prayers of our mind to the saints. The instance shews what is needless, that God can do it if he please; it does not shew that he does it; and that only would have been to the purpose.

Besides, whatever opinion they have of the lawfulness and profitableness of praying to saints, they should have been very much afraid to affirm them to be mediators of intercession; when, without any distinction, the scripture does not only give to Christ the quality of a Mediator, as M. de Meaux grants[f], but likewise the quality of our only Mediator, as he should have granted: for as *there is one God*, so there is *one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus*[g]. Much less should men have been encouraged to make immediate applications to the saints more frequently than to God or to Christ, as if the saints were more easily prevailed with by our prayers than our God and Saviour. These excesses were too notorious to be denied, but withal they were too scandalous to be confessed; but in all reason they ought to have been severely reproved. M. de Meaux would have us to observe that the council teaches, "it is good and profitable" to pray to the saints. And we do observe, that though the Fathers were not insensible of the extravagant practices and doctrines in this matter that were current amongst them, yet they would not vouchsafe to note them with the least censure, but were content to let them go on as they had done before.

[d] Sess. 25. de Invoc. S. Bellar. de Sanct. Beatit. l. 1. c. 20.
[e] Exp. p. 8.
[f] Exp. p. 6.
[g] 1 Tim. ii. 5.

Moreover, they pray to the blessed Virgin, to "protect them from the enemy," to "receive them at the hour of death," to be "propitious to them," to "spare them," to "give them strength," to "give them grace," to "open the gate of everlasting life to them;" and for all that a good Christian can ask of God. Such like prayers do they also offer to the other saints: but neither shall I stay upon this; because they do not go about to justify it amongst us, otherwise than by pretending that they say what they do not mean; and that [h] "the intention of the church, and of her faithful, reduces these prayers always to this form," that the saints would pray for us. Now when they confess that "the outward veneration is established to testify the inward sentiments of the mind [i]," we desire no greater evidence of self-condemnation in this case, than to hear them say quite backward, that the intention of the church and her faithful is established to explain the meaning of so considerable a part of their outward worship. But in the mean time, God help the common people, if they are to be judged after their own intentions and understandings, and not the intentions and expositions of some few guides of their church.

To name no more of these enormities; their dividing to the saints their several offices in their prayers to them is a most unaccountable superstition; i. e. that one saint is applied to for the cure of one disease, and another for another; and some peculiar things desired of almost every one. For how can they persuade us that they desire nothing of the saints but the help of their prayers, when they attribute to each saint his particular virtue and power; unless they think that St. Apollonia's intercession is not as effectual against the gout as the toothache?

SECT. III.

But setting aside these excesses, which several moderate men of their own church have complained of, but all to no purpose; let us hear what they say in behalf of praying to the blessed Virgin, and to the saints at all, supposing it be for nothing but to pray for them, as one creature may do for another; and that they speak to her and them in hymns and strains, which, as to the matter therein contained, do not exalt them above the condition of creatures: in one word, why they

[h] Exp. p. 6. [i] Page 9.

address to her, and the rest of the saints, with any sort of formal invocation.

We dare not do this, because we believe prayer to be an essential part of God's worship, inasmuch as it is sometimes put for the whole. *How shall they call upon him, in whom they have not believed?* i. e. How shall they serve and worship him? It is so incommunicable a worship, that God himself described his own house by it: *My house shall be called an house of prayer.* And surely when God named his house by some part of that service that was performed there, he would choose such a part as was peculiar to himself. This and much more we say for ourselves.

But to all that we can say, they give this plausible answer[k], That it makes no more against their practice, in desiring the prayers of their brethren in heaven, than against theirs and ours, in desiring the prayers of our brethren upon earth; and, as monsieur de M. says, that it "is profitable to pray to the saints, in the same spirit of charity, and according to the same order of fraternal society, which moves us to demand assistance of our brethren living upon earth[l]."

Now this is a very popular way to save themselves from blame, but by no means sufficient: for there is a concurrence of other reasons to make it profitable to desire the prayers of our brethren upon earth besides these two, that *they are our brethren*, and that *we love one another*. God has manifestly approved it in the holy scriptures; that is one reason: besides, we are also sure that when we desire our brethren upon earth to pray for us, they hear us; that is another reason. But neither of these reasons can be justly produced, to shew the profitableness of praying to the saints departed.

But because this is the most common and colourable defence they make, I shall further shew what may and ought to be replied to it by the people of our communion. They say, we may as lawfully desire those in heaven to pray for us, as those on earth: but let us then tell them, that when we ask of one another things proper to be asked, these requests are by no means that which we understand by prayer or religious invoca-

[k] "What have they to say to this prayer, 'Pray for us?' Is it not word for word St. Paul's? Is it more injurious to the Creator, because in the same spirit we address to the saints that live with him?" Past. Let. p. 16.

[l] Exp. p. 6.

tion; and that themselves do not so account them. Monsieur de M. clearly gives them another name; he calls it[m], "beseeching or demanding the assistance of our brethren." But men of all religions do agree this to be a quite different thing from that part of religion which we call *prayer*.

And to make this matter so plain that it can neither be misunderstood nor denied: Suppose a man visited with the pestilence, or any other dangerous distemper, do desire his physician to apply his best skill to recover him; is this prayer, or religious invocation? No; they will not say it is. But if the same person desires the blessed Virgin, or St. Roche, or St. Sebastian, to restore him to health, this they will confess to be prayer. And the reason of the difference is not that the physician is desired to help the patient by his skill in natural remedies, and the saints by their intercession with God. For suppose that the patient sends for the priest, and desires him to pray for him; they will not say this desire is a prayer to the priest, or a religious invocation of him: they will tell you, that the sick man desires or demands the assistance of the priest's prayers. But still, if he calls upon the blessed Virgin, or any of the saints departed, to help him by their prayers; this is properly, and in the account of religion, praying to them. What then is the reason of the difference? for here is a request made to the priest and to the saint, and the same request too: why is one prayer, and the other not? Now though we should not perfectly agree with our adversaries about the reason of the difference; yet so long as it is and must be acknowledged, that the honest requests we make to one another upon earth are not that part of religion which we call *prayer*, but that the requests which we make to the departed saints are prayer; so long, I say, as this is granted, it is plain that this their common argument, "It is lawful and profitable to desire the assistance of our brethren's prayers here upon earth; and therefore it is lawful and profitable to call upon those in heaven to assist us with their prayers," is very deceitful. For this is as much as to say, Those requests which are not prayer may be lawfully made to creatures, and therefore those which are prayer may be made to creatures as lawfully as those that are not.

[m] Pag. 6, 7.

Now if you desire to know what it is in this case that makes the difference, I think the answer is very plain. For the difference is not to be taken, 1, from the matter of the request, for that is the same; nor, 2, from the persons themselves to whom the request is made; for if the saint departed were here, why would my requesting of the same thing be prayer to him and not to the priest? And therefore, 3, it must necessarily lie in the different circumstances of the priest and the saint; that the former is with me, and the latter is absent from me. Requests made to the faithful are made to those that are within the compass of civil conversation; but the same requests made to the blessed Virgin and the saints are made to those that are departed out of the compass of civil conversation. And this is that which makes them not to be prayer in the former case, and to be prayer in the latter.

But if it be further inquired, Why it is prayer to ask the same things of those that are distant from civil conversation, which to ask of those that are within the compass of it is not prayer? the reason seems plainly to be this; That when I address myself to one that is within the compass of civil conversation, in which men use to hear or to understand one another, my assurance that he hears me does no way ascribe to him a knowledge or a presence which is above the condition of a creature. But if I invoke the saints every where, with assurance that they hear me, I have no other reasonable ground of such assurance, than that they are every where present at the same time: for if I acknowledge that there is a certain limited compass within which they can hear and know, let this limit be never so wide, how can I be assured that they are not out of that compass when I speak to them? But the Romanists pray every where to every saint, believing that they are heard. "It is certain," says one of them [n], "that the saints know what we bring forth by the affection of the heart only." "It is of faith," saith another [o], "that the blessed know our prayers which we pour out to them, else it were in vain to make them." Now a request does undoubtedly become prayer, or religious invocation, when the making of it attributes any Divine prerogative or perfection to the Being that is called upon;

[n] Bellar. de Sanct. Beat. l. 1. c. 20.

[o] Pesant. 1. Thom. qu. 12. art. 10. disput. 7.

and therefore, because immensity of presence is an incommunicable perfection of God; and because also requests made to those that are out of all lines of civil communication, being made in faith, do ascribe that power to them which is proper to God only: therefore such requests are proper prayer, or religious invocation.

It is indeed very possible, that he that prays to the blessed Virgin and to the saints may not believe that they are omnipresent; but if he prays, as they pretend to do in the Roman church, with assurance that they hear him, his prayer implies it, and himself, by construction of the fact, ascribes it to them: for let him, if he can, produce any other reasonable ground of assurance that they hear him, wheresoever and whensoever he addresses to them. But instead of that, M. de Meaux tells us, that "the church contents herself to teach, with all antiquity, (not all antiquity I am sure,) those prayers to be very profitable to such who make them, whether it be the saints know them by the ministry and communication of angels, who, according to the testimony of the scripture, know what passes amongst us[p], &c.; whether it be that God himself makes known to them our desires by a particular revelation; or lastly, whether it be that he discovers the secret to them in his Divine essence, in which all truth is comprised." Now if his church could have taught us upon what grounds they are assured that the saints do hear them, either this way or that way; or that God has in general revealed to us that they hear or know the prayers we make to them, one way or other, and therefore that it is profitable to pray to them; she had not been content to teach that the saints do know them some way or other, though she knows not how or why. For what foundation that they hear us can be gathered from such uncertain and loose conjectures as these are? Can any man convince me that a thing is done, by telling me that it might be done, by some way or other, for any thing he knows to the contrary? and is this kind of arguing a sufficient ground to establish so solemn a part of religion as the invocation of saints? I know it is possible for God to reveal to my friend in the East Indies what I say here in England; but am I sure that if I say to him an *Ora pro nobis*, at this distance, it

[p] Exp. p. 8.

reaches him forthwith? It were no difficult matter, if it were needful, to find them trouble enough to clear these very conjectures from absurdity; but as long as they are only conjectures, they can be no foundation of a certain persuasion. Whereas therefore M. de Meaux says, "It is manifest, that to say a creature may have the knowledge of these prayers, by a light communicated to him by God, is not to elevate a creature above his condition;" I say, it is as manifest that this is no ground of certainty that the saints hear our prayers at all; and if this be all they have to say, and yet will pretend to pray to them with faith, there is but one ground left for that faith, viz. that the saints are every where present, and are therefore elevated above the condition of creatures: which though some of themselves do not believe, yet their assurance to be heard being altogether unreasonable without that belief, their prayers do give the omnipresence of God to creatures; which is indeed the great reason why their addresses to the saints are properly prayers.

This therefore I lay down, and let them remove it if they can; That to invocate any creature who is out of the compass of civil conversation—i. e. with whom I cannot converse, as we do with one another, by speaking within the known distances of hearing, or by writing, or messages, or the like—is in itself a vain and foolish thing, because he is out of distance. But if I pretend that it is profitable to invoke the saints, and this upon assurance that they hear me, though I can neither tell which way in particular, nor can shew in general that they do certainly hear me some way that does not infer their omnipresence; there is no remedy, but my invocation of them must by consequence confess that they are omnipresent.

Let therefore those of our communion say, that by calling upon God they do acknowledge his omnipresence, as well as his other infinite perfections; and that they are such acknowledgments which make their invocation of them religious invocation, or that which is prayer in the account of religion; and therefore, that they dare not call upon the saints departed; because they being without the compass of civil conversation, or of such means of communication as we have with one another in this world, we cannot be reasonably assured that they hear us, unless we will suppose them to be omni-

present; which as we do not believe, so we dare not do any thing that looks as if we did believe it.

Thus have I shewn what, in our judgment, makes the difference between asking fit things of our brethren upon earth, and asking the same things of our brethren in heaven; why one is not prayer, and the other is. viz. because the living are within our compass, and the dead are out of it. But whatever it is that makes the difference, since the honest requests we make to one another in this world are not prayer, and the requests we make to the saints in heaven are prayer; it does not follow that we may request the same things of these as we may of those: for if the argument be put into proper expressions, nothing can be more apparently inconsequent; for then it would run thus: Because I make my requests known to those to whom I do not offer the religious worship of prayer in so doing, therefore I may represent my desires to those too whom I cannot call upon, but my desires become the worship of prayer, or religious invocation.

And from hence it appears, that though this act of religious worship be given by those of the Roman church to the meanest saint; yet after the most plausible defence they make of their practice in so doing, it is not to be given to the most excellent creature, and therefore not to the blessed Virgin herself. And by this we may judge what a cause they have to maintain, who call upon the saints, and especially upon the blessed Virgin, in strains so unsuitable to the condition of creatures, as they are whom they invoke; when, because they are but creatures, they ought not to invoke them at all, since they are out of that compass of conversation in which only we could speak to them as to creatures, with faith that they hear us.

SECT. IV.

To come to the next particular: When they kneel to the images of the blessed Virgin and the saints, and prostrate and humble themselves, and pray before them, we are given to understand there is no harm in all this, because they "attribute no other virtue to the images, but that of exciting the remembrance of those they represent[q];" and "their intention is not so much to honour the image, as to honour the apostle or

[q] Exp. p. 9.

the martyr in the presence of the image[r]." As if the image were present, to see and observe the honour that is done the apostle or martyr! For it is no great honour that any body gets, by being honoured in the presence of mere wood or stone, that can neither see nor hear. This was an odd expression of M. de Meaux, this of "honouring the martyr in the presence of the image," no way suitable to the design of his exposition; but fitted only to the superstition of such people who have been made to believe, by the weeping and smiling images, and by the rolling of their eyes, and by the shaking of their heads and bodies, &c., that they are a kind of animated things. But to let this pass: What though M. de Meaux "attributes no other virtues to images but that of exciting remembrance;" what though he takes a very commendable care in his diocese to make the people stop there; does he not know by experience, do not all wise men know it, and many honest men in the communion of that church confess it, that in those images which the people are taught to present themselves before, with all the ceremonies of respect and veneration, there is another fatal virtue, and that is to excite devotion toward themselves, even to the demanding of favours from them, and putting trust in them? Is it not as notorious, that the wretched people are guilty of worshipping the images of the saints no otherwise than they do the saints themselves, as that they worship the saints no otherwise than they worship God himself; as Ludov. Vives complained[s]. If it be said that these abuses may be provided against, and images may be still honoured, (for *honour* is the word, though *religious worship* is the thing,) I would know why men should make provisions in this case, as if they were wiser than God; who, to prevent these mischiefs, has forbidden image-worship altogether. If there were any such advantages to be made of it, in comparison to which the danger of it were nothing at all, how comes it to be so severely prohibited? But when we consider for whose sake chiefly they pretend the profitableness of image-worship, we see how true it is that the wisdom of man is but foolishness when it would mend the provisions of God. For images are by all means to be retained and honoured, because they are the books and remembrancers of the common

[r] Exp. p. 10. [s] Com. in Civit. Dei, lib. 8. c. 27.

people, and helps to their piety and devotions; who therefore cannot be without them: but M. de Meaux[1] knows that these are most apt to be led into the worst superstitions by images, and that it is one of the hardest things in the world to prevent it.

M. de Meaux tells us, "their intention is not so much to honour the image, as the apostle or martyr." He will say, too, that it is the intention of the church that none of the people should intend more than this comes to. But let him tell me, how or where the church has expressed herself with the least degree of that zeal, which the redressing of such horrible abuses in this matter, as are everywhere known, does still require? The superstition of the vulgar in their communion is notorious; and, which is still worse, the doctrines leading to the most superstitious opinions and practices in this kind were and are notorious: for instance; that the same worship is due to the image which is due to the prototype: and are not these things uncensured by the church of Rome to this day? If indeed we could once see that church bestir herself against the gross excess of image-worship, as she does against those that do not worship images at all, we might allow something to this exposition of their intentions. But as far as we can see, they that worship the very images themselves, and put confidence in them, go for very good catholics; while we that dare not worship them at all, because God has forbidden it, are for our forbearance used as they use heretics.

But setting all this aside, what signifies the intention of the church, if it ran through all the members of it, against an express prohibition in the scriptures? It is not lawful to do that with a distinction which is forbidden without a distinction. God hath said, *Thou shalt not bow down to* images, *nor worship them*. If indeed he had elsewhere made an exception to this rule, it had been lawful for us to have made use of his permission, it had been necessary for us to have observed his command in the excepted case. But where God hath not excepted or distinguished, we ought not to do so; unless we will open a door to evacuate all Divine laws whatsoever, by arbitrary distinctions and reservations.

In short, that worship which they pretend to give to the

[1] Trid. Sess. 25. De Invoc. 8.

saints by their images has these two terrible prejudices against it:

1. That the honour which they give to the saints by their images, supposing none of it to be lost by the way, is not to be given to the saints themselves; as we have shewn already.

2. That the worship of images, let it be explicated with all the fineness and arts of disguise they are masters of, is, after all, to be utterly excluded out of religion. This being a worship which God will by no means endure should be given to himself, having universally prohibited it: *Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image, nor the likeness of any thing that is*, &c.: which is, to my understanding, as plain a prohibition of all image-worship whatsoever, as these words would have been an injunction of it, viz. "Thou shalt make to thyself such or such images and pictures, and shalt bow down before them, and worship them," if this had been said instead of the contrary. Now indeed if this had been said, it had been extremely necessary to distinguish between relative worship and absolute worship, between worship terminated upon the image, and intended to the person represented by the image; between taking it for a god or a saint, and taking it only for some representation of the one or the other. But as in that case such distinctions had been very necessary; so as the case stands they are vain and impertinent. For if image-worship had been commanded or permitted, still we had been to worship images but as images; but it being forbidden, we are not to worship them at all. I say, if it had been allowed, we must indeed have worshipped them with a distinction; but as it is forbidden, we must not worship them, though with a distinction; because it is forbidden without any distinction, and as universally as words can express any thing.

M. de Meaux says, that "after the same manner we ought to understand the honour which they pay to relics, after the example of the primitive church." The example of the primitive church shall be considered in its place. In the mean time, if the worship of images and the worship of relics are to stand or fall together, we have already seen what will become of this, having shewn how unsuccessfully they plead for the other. But if M. de Meaux pleads for the practice of the people, or even the doctrine of his church in this point, he

must pardon us, if we do not think fit to take general apologies for a reasonable inducement, to do those things which he was not willing to name in particular. "We may say in general," says M. de Meaux, "that if protestants would but consider how the affection which we bear to any one propagates itself, without being divided, to his children, to his friends; and after that, by several degrees to the representation of him, to any remains of him, and to any thing which renews in us his remembrance. If they did but conceive that honour has the like progression, seeing honour is nothing else but love mixed with respect and fear; in fine, if they would but consider that all the exterior worship of the catholic church has its source in God himself, and returns back again to him; they would never believe that this worship, which he himself alone animates, could excite his jealousy." M. de Meaux considered very well, that it was much better to put us off with this general account, than to mention the particulars he goes about to justify. It seems the worship of relics is intended for the honour of the martyrs, and the worship of the martyrs for the honour of God. But what kind of superstition might not be defended by such apologies as these? If men's blood, bones, teeth, hairs, coats, girdles, shoes, and such like little things, may be incensed: if they may be exposed with a *Venite ad adorandum*, to receive the prostrations of the people, in the presence of Christ himself, whom they suppose to be bodily present upon the altar[a]; if they may be sought unto for great graces, and for miraculous cures; if they may be carried about to preserve a man from fire, from storms, from pestilence, from the danger of battle, and from ghostly as well as bodily enemies; if all this, I say, be but the effect of a progression of honour, and may be brought off with a protestation, that the worship is animated by God alone, and is performed for his sake.

Monsieur de Meaux says, that "if God, as jealous as he is of the love of men, does not look upon us as dividing ourselves betwixt him and his creatures, when we love our neighbour for the love of him: the same God, though jealous of the honour which his faithful pay him, cannot look upon them as dividing that worship which is due to him alone, when, out of

[a] Catech. R. de Cultu Sanct.

respect to him, they honour those whom he hath honoured." But as there may be an inordinate love of our neighbour, whom yet God hath commanded us to love; so there may be an inordinate honour given by us even to those whom God hath honoured: and if we go beyond the bounds that God hath set us in loving the one and honouring the other; if we love our neighbour as we should love God only; if we honour the martyrs and the saints as God only ought to be honoured; it will, I presume, be no sufficient excuse to say, that it was done out of respect to God. The thing which M. de Meaux should have spoken to, but has not, is this, that the honour they pay to relics is no part of that worship which is due to none but God. Without this, it is in vain to flourish out a general notion which no man denies, viz. that we may so love the faithful, and honour the martyrs, and the very relics of martyrs, as not to divide between them and God the love and worship which is due to him alone. The truth is, M. de Meaux had a very hard task in the exposition of the veneration which they give to relics: for whereas he had some colour to insist upon the moderation of his church in the business of images, since the council of Trent declares that there is no virtue in them for which they ought to be reverenced or trusted in; yet he wanted such a declaration as this as to the business of relics, and could not say that either the council or the Catechism declares against believing any virtue in relics; since notwithstanding the caution they have used in the manner of expression, both the one and the other teach the contrary. So that the superstition of relics in the Roman church is greater than that of images. And therefore M. de Meaux had nothing to do but to set off the whole matter by general apologies, because it would not bear a defence of the particulars. But of this I shall say no more, because the exposition he makes of their doctrine and practice, as to this matter, is very like to that which he makes of the general difference between that worship which they give to God alone, and that which they give to the blessed Virgin and the saints. Which is the next thing I am to consider.

SECT. V.

They teach, that "the adoration which is due to God alone consists principally in believing he is the Creator and Lord of

all things; and in adhering to him with all the powers of our soul, by faith, hope, and charity, as to him alone who can render us happy by the communication of an infinite good, which is himself. [x] This interior adoration has its exterior marks, of which the principal is sacrifice, which cannot be offered to any but to God; because a sacrifice is established to make a public acknowledgment and a solemn protestation of God's sovereignty and our absolute dependance." Thus the worship they give to God only is described. Concerning the worship they give to the blessed Virgin and the saints, thus M. de Meaux speaks: "The church teaches us, that all religious worship ought to terminate in God, as its necessary end; and that if the honour which she renders to the blessed Virgin and to the saints may in some sense be called religious, it is for its necessary relation to God [y]."

We shall now be better able to examine the difference which he puts in general between the adoration which is due to God alone, and that honour which they render to the blessed Virgin and the saints, because we have seen in great part in what this honour consists.

What M. de Meaux has said concerning the inward adoration of God is exceedingly well said. But if we go on, and take all together, we cannot but discern that this great man had laboured his thoughts into such words, as should provide, with great appearance of piety, for the honour of God, that we might not be offended; while yet he was to save some of it for the blessed Virgin and the saints, that he might not seem to desert the cause of his church.

For whereas he distinguisheth between the inward and outward worship which is due to God only, he avoids that distinction in speaking of the honour which they render to the blessed Virgin and the saints; for it had been a dangerous way of exposing the doctrine of the pretended catholics, to tell us what inward or mental worship is to be given them.

Whereas the title of the section is [z], that "religious worship is terminated in God alone:" when he was to speak of the honour they render to the blessed Virgin and to the saints, he qualifies it with this supposition, "if it may in some sense be called religious." Now to say, if it be religious; nay, if it be

[x] Exp. p. 4. [y] Exp. p. 5. [z] Sect. 3.

called religious, and that but in some sense too, are very new and surprising ways of expression, and would make one suspect, that all of them are not fully satisfied in giving a worship to the blessed Virgin and to the saints; which, without all question, is, and therefore ought to be called, religious worship; as those that have gone before them in this cause have without scruple called it.

He gives this reason why sacrifice is to be offered to God only; "because a sacrifice is established to make a public acknowledgment and a solemn profession of God's sovereignty and our absolute dependance." But when he should give a proportionable reason why his church renders to the blessed Virgin and to the saints the honour of praying to them; which is one instance he presently names; he slips it over, and pretends no more, than that "all religious worship ought to terminate in God, as its necessary end; and if it may be called religious, it is because of its necessary relation to him." Now he should have said, prayer is established to make a public acknowledgment and solemn protestation, as well of the power and excellency of the blessed Virgin and the saints, as of the perfection of God. But though the nature of his discourse required some such reason, yet the nature of his design would not bear it, which was to remove the frightful ideas of his religion which we have entertained, and to represent it in a more agreeable and pleasing form than we have yet known it by.

Other observations of this kind might be made, to make it probable that it cost even M. de Meaux some little trouble to contrive his discourse into this plausible appearance, and to shew, that it is no easy matter, at the same time, to make a smooth representation of their religion, and not to change it. But I shall now offer my reasons, to shew the unsatisfactoriness of his exposition in this cause, as he hath formed it.

1. Setting aside their profession of one God, which is supposed in the question concerning his particular worship; I find no outward mark of the adoration that is due to God only mentioned but that of sacrifice, which indeed M. de Meaux says is the principal. But in a point of this consequence, I wish he had been pleased to name the rest. But I think I may appeal to the sincerity of M. de Meaux, whether by *sa-*

crifice he means any thing more than the sacrifice of the mass: in which they pretend to offer up Jesus Christ, the Son of God, his natural body, soul, and divinity, as a propitiation for the quick and the dead: for my part, I cannot find but they give all other outward marks of adoration to the blessed Virgin but this; so that the worship given to God, and that to her are distinguished, I fear, but by one mark. And what a rare account is this of God's incommunicable worship, if that mark too should prove to be one of their own inventions; if such a sacrifice as that was not appointed by God: if indeed it be repugnant to the plain authority of the scripture, as the exposition of our doctrine hath irrefragably shewn in a very little compass! This is my first exception, that all the outward marks of religious worship which God hath established, they make common to God and the saints; and that which they give to God only, they have made themselves.

2. Even this very sacrifice of the mass is offered up by them in honour of the blessed Virgin and the saints: for thus the oblation runs in their missals: "Accept, O holy Trinity, this oblation which we offer to thee, in honour of the most glorious Virgin, the mother of God," &c. Now surely they would not offer God himself in sacrifice to a creature. But it comes something near it, to offer up such a sacrifice in honour of a creature. For while this is done, how can it be said that sacrifice is reserved to be a protestation of that honour which is due to God only?

3. They burn incense to the blessed Virgin and the saints; which being done as a religious rite in their honour, will hardly avoid being a sacrifice. For though this rite of burning incense was no part of the religion that Jesus or his apostles taught, nor used at all in the ancient church; yet it should seem to be no less a sacrifice now, than it was among the Jews, or than it would have been, if it had been transferred from the synagogue into the church. I suppose if the church of Rome had thought fit to introduce the oblations of beasts and birds into her religious worship, she could not deny but such oblations had been properly sacrifices, and were to be made to God only: and that though it were Judaism to offer them at all, it were yet idolatry to offer them to any but to God. But what should make any such difference

between slaying of victims and burning of incense, that the former should belong to God only, and not the latter, I cannot comprehend: for the *altar of incense was most holy unto the Lord*; it was overlaid with gold, which the altar of burnt-offerings was not; and it was more holy than the altar of burnt-offerings, as standing in the more holy place; and *none but the seed of Aaron was to come near to offer incense before the Lord.* No wonder therefore that Hezekiah brake in pieces the brasen serpent when they burned incense to it; for this was no less than offering sacrifice to it. To conclude, the idolatry which the heathens sought to bring the Christians to, was no other than to take a little incense in their hands, and to throw it into the fire of their altars. But yet they burn incense to the images and relics of the blessed Virgin and the saints; and then how can they pretend to sacrifice to God only? But,

4. Setting all this aside, let us consider that they grant sacrifice is to be offered to God only, because it is "established to make a public acknowledgment and a solemn protestation of God's sovereignty and of our absolute dependence." Now if this be true, then whatsoever is established for the same purpose is *holy to the Lord* also. And therefore religious invocation by prayers for good things, by confessions of sin, by vows of repentance and duty, and by thanksgivings for benefits received, is to be offered to God only. For in truth, these are "acknowledgments and protestations of God's sovereignty and of our absolute dependence." Nay, in truth, they are more noble and excellent sacrifices than those victims, and other more sensible oblations, which God required under the law or before it, and which he does not require now. But that which I lay the greatest stress upon is this, that those material sacrifices were so many rites and ceremonies of invocation, diversified according to the several ends of invocation, either for confessing of sin, or obtaining a benefit, or returning praises for benefits received. Hence it is, that *prayer* and *sacrifice* are put one for the other in the holy scriptures; as when it is said, *The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord, but the prayer of the upright is his delight*[a]: by which words it is plain, that the sacrifice of the wicked is his

[a] Prov. xv. 8.

prayer; and the prayer of the upright is his sacrifice. Now prayer and sacrifice, strictly so called, were both acts of worship; but prayer more excellent than sacrifice, because sacrifice was the rite of prayer, and a rite which God required no longer than till that most precious sacrifice of the Son of God was offered for us; the merit of which alone it is that made the prayers of good men in all ages acceptable to God.

And by the way, it should be considered by the gentlemen of the church of Rome, that when those imperfect sacrifices, which prefigured the oblation of Jesus Christ once for all, were offered under the law, the prayers of God's people were then made only to God. And therefore now, that the prayers of the church are sanctified by the accomplishment of the sacrifice of the Son of God, to offer any of them to a creature is rather a greater dishonour to God than it would have been before. For if the patriarchs and the Jews were to pray to him only to whom alone they offered sacrifice, i. e. to God, much more shall the sacrifice of the Son of God, which hath been actually offered for us, infer our obligation to make all our prayers and religious invocations to God only, to whom we have access by the merit of that sacrifice.

But this I insist upon, that if we compare the legal sacrifices with the prayers of God's people under the law, these were no less protestations of God's sovereignty and man's absolute dependence than those were; and that the *house of God* was no less denominated by a service peculiar to him, in being called *a house of prayer*, than if it had been called *a house of sacrifice*, as it was an house of sacrifice too. A house of sacrifice to the Jews, and *a house of prayer to all nations.*

Now if these more spiritual and reasonable sacrifices of a penitent and broken heart, a believing and humble heart, a devout and thankful heart, offered in religious invocation, are such acknowledgments as M. de Meaux speaks of; then are they not to be offered to the blessed Virgin and the saints, but to God only. And what now is it that M. de Meaux means, by terminating the honour they render to the blessed Virgin upon God? Is it this, that the honour done to her, by invocating her with prayers, hymns, confessions of sin, vows, and devoting themselves to her service, is all intended by the

church for the honour of God? I would then know, why any sacrifice may not also be offered directly to the Virgin, the church intending that the honour of it should terminate upon God, and believing that he has all the honour of it at last. No, say they, "sacrifice is established to make a public acknowledgment of God's sovereignty." But then I add, that religious invocation is established to make such an acknowledgment too; so that if terminating religious worship upon God will warrant giving it to the blessed Virgin and the saints, their church may give to them that worship of the more sensible sacrifices which yet they pretend to deny. And if no worship is to be given to the saints, which is established to make a solemn acknowledgment of God's sovereignty and our dependance, they must deny to the blessed Virgin and to the saints that more spiritual worship of prayers, hymns, and vows, which they give. Nor will they ever be able to avoid these difficulties but by coming out of the clouds, and confessing, according to the plainness and the simplicity of the scriptures, that all religious worship is due to God, and to him only, inasmuch as religious worship is established to make an acknowledgment of God's sovereignty and our absolute dependance; and public acts of religious worship, to make public and solemn acknowledgments thereof.

SECT. VI.

Thus I have considered the defence that M. de Meaux has made of the worship of the blessed Virgin and the saints, as it is practised in the church of Rome; and I promise myself, that whoever shall seriously consider what has been said will not be encouraged, by the exposition of this practice, to venture upon it. I know that many of the Roman church fortify themselves against all our arguments upon these points by this persuasion; that so long as they do not make gods of the saints, but believe and profess that there is but one God, infinite in all perfections, all the honours they give to the blessed Virgin and the saints are to be interpreted by this protestation, that they have no other God but the Creator of the world, nor Lord, but the Saviour of mankind. But if they in this manner assure themselves, and would encourage others, I beseech them to consider—and would to God they would all

consider but this one thing—that if the sin of idolatry could not take place where there is such a profession and such a faith in one God, (though I more than fear the contrary,) yet the saint-worship of the Roman church does approach so very near it, and is so very like it, that even this (if no more were to be said) should be a sufficient reason to deter us from it. A woman that is faithful to her husband will not only forbear doing the utmost injury to him by giving his bed to another, but she will avoid all those familiarities and caresses with any other man which are scandalous, which lead to the least treachery, and which would provoke her husband's jealousy. Now God has described his people's relation to him by the relation of a wife to her husband, not only in the Old Testament, but in the New; from whence it is that the worship of other gods is called fornication, whoredom, and adultery. Thus God charged the Jews for [b] *inflaming themselves with idols under every green tree*, and *setting up their beds upon every lofty and high mountain, and enlarging their bed*, because they had many idols. Thus it was said of Israel, that she had [c] *through the lightness of her whoredoms defiled the land, and committed adultery with stocks and stones.* This is the language of the whole sixteenth chapter of Ezekiel, where God threatened to judge the Jews as women that break wedlock are judged, and would give them their reward in fury.

Now supposing that there were no other idolatry in the nature of the thing, no other spiritual whoredom and fornication, but worshipping that for God which is not God; and that if we do but make this difference between the worship that we give to God, and that which we give to his courtiers and favourites; that still we acknowledge them to be creatures, and not gods; servants, and not lords; and so do not give them that last and distinguishing honour, which to give would, by the confession of all, be spiritual adultery in the highest degree: supposing this, I say, yet let us in the name of God consider, that to give religious worship to creatures as well as to God, to fall down to images as well as to God, and to give almost quite throughout the same outward expressions of honour, of faith, of love, of religious expectation and dependance to the blessed Virgin, and to saints and angels, which

[b] Isaiah lvii. 5, 7. [c] Jerem. iii. 6, 9.

we give to God; if it be not downright whoredom, is yet a whorish behaviour, and more than sufficient to provoke the Lord to jealousy. I cannot but speak in the language of the scripture upon an argument that the scriptures so largely treat of in this language.

It is worthy of much observation, that God gives this very reason why he prohibited the worshipping of images: *For I the Lord thy God am a jealous God.* And that we might not think it a light matter to provoke his jealousy, he adds, *and I visit the sins of the fathers upon the children, to the third and fourth generation of them that hate me.* I know who they are that would fain believe the worship of no other images but those of the gods of the Gentiles to be forbidden in the second commandment. But I must needs say, upon this occasion, that if that had been the only design of that commandment, it is very strange that God should note the worshipping of the heathen gods with no other penalty than that which his jealousy would inflict; for to have any other gods besides him, is without all question spiritual whoredom, and had been threatened with divorce, if the prohibition of so great a crime had needed the sanction of any express threatening. But when he threatens the worship of images with the effects of his jealousy, it seems plain that he means such image-worship as is consistent with acknowledging him to be our only God. And yet this is the least of all those reasons by which it appears to me that he forbids, in this commandment, the worship of all images whatsoever. I deny not therefore but a man may kneel, may kiss, may incense, may prostrate himself, and pray before an image, and all this while ascribe no divinity to it, nor take it to be his god. So likewise he may pray, and make vows, and offer thanks and praises to the saints and to the blessed Virgin, and not take them neither for his gods. But because God is the peerless Majesty of heaven and earth, he will be served with a peerless worship; he will therefore have no such things as these done in religion, nor creatures to have respect shewn them, that looks so like to the worship which he requires himself. Why do I say *so like?* That which they give to the blessed Virgin and to the saints is almost the very same. But if we do such things as these, it will not serve our turn to plead that we still keep the inward

adoration of spirit and truth entirely for him, though we thus honour his creatures with religious rites and services, any more than it would excuse a woman, that had given all the favours and liberty to another man that could provoke her husband's jealousy, to say, (though she could say it with truth,) that she remembered all the while who was her husband, and whatever liberties besides she used, that she had still kept his bed undefiled.

This consideration I could not forbear to use: and that in compassion to those whose prejudices will not let them feel the sense of those reasonings by which we prove the Roman church to be guilty of downright idolatry. For if the fear of God's jealousy would keep them from giving those honours to the saints, which look so like Divine honours, if they are not so, we should gain our end upon them, though not by the force of the best arguing the case will bear; and this is our end, that God may not be any more dishonoured, and their salvation hindered, by the unchristian doctrines and practices of this sort. I have therefore now proceeded upon this supposition, that they are not guilty of perfect idolatry in those things which we complain of, and yet shewn what urgent cause there is upon another account for a reformation of them. But I conclude this with professing, that I have supposed them not guilty of that fearful crime, only to make way for another argument, since all arguments are to be used in so important a matter, that have a foundation of truth: but not in distrust of those arguments which prove them guilty of it.

SECT. VII.

The second thing I propounded was, to shew the beginnings of this strange worship amongst Christians which they offer in the church of Rome to the blessed Virgin and to the saints. For I must not forget that M. de Meaux pretends, that his church in these things teaches as the primitive church taught, and that she does what she teaches with all antiquity.

But what if nothing of all this was either taught or done in the church for 360 years after Christ? M. de Meaux says, that "those of the pretended reformation (obliged by the strength of truth) begin to acknowledge, that the custom of praying to saints and honouring their relics was established

even in the fourth age of the church." This he takes all occasions to insinuate, and with these colours he serves himself to represent the reformation as odiously as he can devise. Thus he tells us in his Pastoral Letter[d]: "But above all, what horror are they worthy of, who cast the accusation [of idolatry] upon the whole church, and also on the church of the first ages?" where he takes it for granted, that the honour and innocence of the first ages must stand or fall with the cause of the Roman church; and so takes occasion to accuse us of a great and fearful crime, viz. that "we cast the accusation of idolatry upon the whole church, even the church of the first ages." He had observed but just before, that "those who bear false and scandalous witness against an innocent person, are condemned to the same punishment which the crime of which they bear witness did deserve, had it been found true." And therefore "we deserve before men the horror which is due to idolatry, and shall receive the just punishment thereof in the sight of God." If this rule be true, and we must incur the penalties of idolatry if we falsely accuse others of it, M. de Meaux ought to reflect upon himself, who, having accused us of falsely accusing the first ages in this matter, supports his accusation by taking these two things for granted; first, that we acknowledge[e] "the illustrious fourth age to have requested the prayers of martyrs, and honoured relics," as the pretended catholics have done since; secondly, that the fourth age being granted them, the first three must be theirs in course. If M. de Meaux be safe upon these grounds, we have no great cause to apprehend the horrors and punishments of false accusation; and if this be all he hath to say, it is but a very slender ground for an appeal to the primitive church and to all antiquity. For neither have the reformed acknowledged heretofore, nor do they now[f] begin to acknowledge, that the customs of the Roman church in these points were established in the fourth age of the church. Nor, if they did acknowledge it, would this acknowledgment give away the primitive church and all antiquity in favour of praying to saints and worshipping of saints and relics, unless the first three ages were less ancient and primitive than those that followed.

[d] Past. L. p. 29. [e] Ibid. [f] Ibid. p. 8.

That which we acknowledge is not, that saint-worship was established in the fourth age; but this, that towards the latter end of the fourth age some unhappy occasions were given for the establishing of that worship in after-ages, which we could wish had never been given, and which the great men of those days (we have reason to believe) would have prevented, if they had been prophets as well as holy men, and foreseen the mischiefs into which they were ripened by the superstition of after-times.

I shall therefore demonstrate, that it is a vain thing for the pretended catholics to presume that they have the authority of the three first ages for the worship of saints, images, and relics, upon supposition that the doctors, towards the close of the fourth age, were theirs in these points: and then I shall not fear to give the truest account I can of those practices at that time, which grew afterwards into the superstitions we now complain of.

Monsieur de Meaux says, "It will not appear very likely that M. Daillé should understand the sentiments of the Fathers of the three first ages better than those who gathered, as I may say, the succession of their doctrine after their deaths." These gentlemen, I perceive, will content themselves with any pretence to shift off the trial of their doctrines and practices by the authority of the three first ages. For whether that be likely or not which M. de Meaux here puts, yet I hope we may look into the writings of the most primitive Fathers, to see how things went in their times. And it is very likely that M. Daillé might understand the sentiments of the Fathers of the three first ages, as well as he understood the sentiments of those of the fourth. And so long as we can have recourse to the undoubted writings of the three first ages, we may get the doctrine of those Fathers this way with a little more assurance, than by guessing what their sentiments were from the books of their successors; which every reasonable man must acknowledge, unless it be reasonable to suppose that the Fathers of the three first ages did not understand their own sentiments so well as the Fathers of the fourth understood them.

Now in the first place, the profound silence of the three first ages, and the better half of the fourth, as to the worship of the blessed Virgin and the saints, and their images and relics,

should be enough to determine the first point in question. And this silence is not only directly confessed by some of our adversaries, but as effectually confessed by the rest that labour to find some hints of these practices in these primitive Fathers; but by such interpretations and consequences, that it is almost as great a shame to confute as to make them. Now the silence of these Fathers ought not to be rejected as an incompetent proof, because it is but a negative. For since we pretend that these practices are innovations, and were never heard of in the ancient church; it is not reasonable to demand a better proof of it than, that in their books, some of which give large and particular accounts of their worship, and of their doctrines concerning worship, we can nowhere meet with the least intimation or footstep of them. Would our adversaries have us bring express testimonies out of the Fathers against these things, as if they wrote and disputed by the spirit of prophecy against those corruptions that should arise several ages after they were dead? We have, as I shall shew, other ways of discovering their sentiments besides this, that they make not the least mention of these services. But to demand more than their perpetual silence in these cases is unreasonable; because no satisfactory account can be given of it but this, that the worship we speak of was indeed no part of their religion. Had it been some indifferent rite or ceremony that we contend about, this argument, from the silence of the Fathers, against its antiquity, might with some colour be rejected; because it were unreasonable to expect that they should take notice in their writings of every custom, of how little moment soever. And yet we find, that in matters even of this slight nature in comparison, they have not been wanting to give us very much information. But it is altogether incredible, that so notable and famous a part of the worship of Christians, as that which is now given to the blessed Virgin and to the saints, should not be mentioned by any one of them, if it had been the custom of those times. Justin Martyr, Athenagoras, Tertullian, Minutius Felix, all the apologists, or at least one of them, would have taken some notice of it, especially since this part of their religion would have needed exposition and defence more than all the rest; for it would have made them obnoxious to the recriminations of

the heathens, and brought all their own arguments upon themselves which they had used against the heathens, in defence of their own worshipping the one God, and him only.

But perhaps they all agreed to conceal this saint-worship from the heathens, for the same reason why Salmeron thinks the apostles and evangelists concealed it at first from both Jews and Gentiles, because, forsooth, "it had been hard to require it of the Jews[s]," (who had been taught to pray to God only, and to worship none but him,) and by publishing it, "occasion had been given to the Gentiles to think that many gods were now offered them, instead of that multitude of gods which they had forsaken." A very likely reason thus far; that if this had been the doctrine of the church, it was highly necessary to keep it secret, till heathen idolatry were extinguished, and none should be left to upbraid the Christians with removing the old gods of the heathens, to make way for new ones of their own. And without all doubt, those that were prevailed upon in every persecution, by force and flattery, to revolt from Christianity, though they had been false to the rest of their religion, yet were true to this secret of it; and never discovered to the heathens, that (whatever the church pretended) they had been taught to say Ave Maries to the blessed Virgin, and to worship her and the dead saints and martyrs with prayers and hymns, &c. I thank this Jesuit, however, for confessing so manifest a truth, that this adoration of saints was not fit to be exposed to the Gentiles. But if matters were carried thus, I think they were not carried with great sincerity. This might be like the policy of Jesuits, but it did not by any means become the simplicity of Christians; and yet I think a Jesuit would hardly have carried a secret in his sleeve, so dangerous to be discovered, and so impossible to be concealed. For that the church should have the good fortune to conceal it for above 300 years from the idolatrous philosophers, and priests of the Gentiles, was, of all other things that passed in that long time, the most miraculous, and requires such a faith to believe it, as believes a thing the more, the more incredible it is. But though this, in the opinion of all indifferent persons, will be a sufficient prejudice against supposing that the church kept her doctrine and practice from

[s] Salmer in 1 Tim. ii. Disp. 8.

the knowledge of her enemies; yet I believe it will be a stronger prejudice against it, amongst those (of which number I profess myself to be one) that honour the memories of the ancient martyrs, and love them for their constancy to the death, in adhering to our dear Lord and Master Jesus; that this crafty design is no way reconcilable to that spirit of integrity which the gospel frames us to, if we are true Christians; and of which they, if any, were undeniable examples. One would think therefore, that if the heathens knew no such doctrines and practices amongst the Christians, that the Christians had none such to be known. And in the opinion of Salmeron himself, had those known any such thing, these had not failed to have heard of it. Why then did they not charge the Christians with worshipping the blessed Virgin, when nothing would have been more pertinent and apposite? I will give one instance of this question, so clear and full, that it shall render all others needless. There was nothing that Celsus insisted upon against the Christians worshipping Jesus Christ with more spite and triumph, than that Jesus was, as he called him, "a most vile person, taken, beaten, and crucified." It was for this he scorned the Christians, that they should count him the *Son of God* [h], and worship him now dead, who lived and died ignominiously. It must be uneasy for a Christian to write or read his blasphemies upon this occasion [i]. But there is one place that I must not forbear, and that is, where the foresaid wretch brings in a Jew, and with the Jew does himself upbraid Jesus, "that he was born in a little town of Judæa, and that of a wandering woman, miserably poor, that spun for her living; who was also for adultery thrown out of doors by the carpenter her husband, and being thus driven away by him, and wandering up and down in a base fashion, brought forth Jesus in a corner [k]." Thus did that accursed villain blaspheme the blessed Virgin, in despite to Jesus her most holy Son; I say in despite to him, because he was worshipped by the Christians. By bringing forth the execrable stories of the Jews concerning the mother, the impious infidel designed to make the church of God ashamed of worshipping her Son, whom he sought to dis-

[h] Orig. cont. Cels. lib. 2. 3. [i] Ibid. lib. 7, 8. [k] Orig. lib. i. cont. Cels.

parage this way, as well as by objecting the poverty of his life, and the ignominy of his death. But suppose, I beseech you, that the church in those days had honoured the mother of Jesus little less than Jesus himself; that she had been called *the queen of heaven;* that the story of her assumption had been then invented; that she had been worshipped as the *lady of the world,* and served with prayers and vows and incense, and with all or with any of those religious rites that she is now served with? would that spiteful wretch have failed to reproach the enemies of his gods with so plain a matter of reproach? Did he think they had reason to be ashamed of making so helpless and so unfortunate a man, as the pagans took Jesus to be, the object of a "most excellent worship[1];" and would he not have thought it a great shame, if they had given a superexcellent worship to so helpless and so scandalous a woman, as the false miscreant reckoned the mother to be? Did they insult over the Christians for making a God of the son of such a mother? what would they have said, if the church had given them the least occasion to suspect that it had made a goddess of the mother herself? But of this not one word is to be met with in all the reproaches of the infidel; no, nor of Trypho or Cæcilius, or any the most bitter enemies of the Christian name, for the three first ages, where it lay as fair to be taken up, as argument and occasion could make it. What account then is to be given of this omission? It was no omission of theirs at all; the church had not yet given them this handle against itself: no such things as these were known amongst Christians, and therefore their enemies did not lay them to their charge: their enemies, I say, who falsely accused them as to other matters, upon the most slight and frivolous occasions. They accused them of worshipping an ass's head; of killing a child at their solemn assemblies; and of adultery and incest, as you may see in Minutius Felix, and elsewhere; and all this upon the most ridiculous grounds imaginable. But it seems the Christians paid religious worship to the Virgin, and to dead men and women, and their watchful enemies were content to say never a word of it. Alas! these wise men did not know that the Christians derided them for such things as these; perhaps they were always deaf when it

[1] Orig. lib. 8. cont. Cels.

was told them that the Christians did the same things themselves; or they had quite forgotten it, when it was most proper to remember it; or were so silly, as not to discern the advantage they were to make of it; or so imprudent, as to accuse them of other things which could be easily disproved, rather than to accuse them of those things which could not be denied. *The children of this world* were now grown fools *in their generation.* He that can believe these things, let him believe them!

I shall add this only, that when the least occasions were once given to suspect that the martyrs were worshipped by the church, the heathens immediately laid hold on the pretence, especially Julian and Eunapius [m], who urged the accusation with all the stings of malice, as their predecessors in this cause against Christ would certainly have done, had there been the least colour for it.

But to return to the Virgin Mary. We have seen that in these latter ages the doctrine of her worship is grown to be no mean part of the body of divinity with the doctors of the Roman church. There is no end of writing books in her honour, and to excite and direct devotion to her. A sermon cannot be preached, but she must be addressed to with an *Ave Mary;* nor a large volume written, but it is odds that it is concluded with, *Praise to God and to the virgin mother Mary.* One would therefore expect to find all things full of veneration and address to the blessed Virgin in the writings of the primitive Fathers, that is, to meet with it at every turn in their expositions of the faith, in their exhortations to devotion and piety, and in all their homilies to the people. But if you look for any such thing, I will be bold to say you will lose your labour, unless it were some satisfaction to find that the world is very much altered from what it was, and the state of religion not a little changed.

But the worst is, that what these Fathers say of her is but very little in comparison, and that not of set purpose, but incidentally and occasionally, as they were led to it by other things. I know not how the Fathers can be excused, but that the scriptures speak as sparingly of her as they.

It were something, however, if their occasional passages con-

[m] Cyril contra Julian. lib. 6.

cerning her intimated a greater regard to her service in their practice than they have shewn in their writings; or if they discovered but some obscure prints and footsteps of such a devotion to her as we seek for. Let us therefore see after what manner they speak of the blessed Virgin.

I observe, that the highest strains in her praise run upon a comparison between her and Eve. Thus Justin Martyr [n], who says very little else of her, tells us, that "Eve, being a virgin, conceived by the word of the serpent, and brought forth death; but the Virgin Mary, receiving the message of the angel, conceived in faith; therefore that which was born of her was holy, viz. *the Son of God.*" He proves also, against Trypho [o], that Christ was to be born of a virgin, according to the prophets.

After Justin comes Irenæus, and with greater circumstance pursues the forementioned comparison, against those stupid heretics that denied God to be the creator of all things, and that he used his own works. For against these, Irenæus, amongst other arguments, produced this, that "Christ took flesh of Mary." And then he proceeds to shew how convenient it was that he should be born of a virgin. First [p], he opposes the *disobedience* in the case of the forbidden tree, by which sin came into the world, to that *obedience* which was performed upon a tree, by him that brought life to the world. He opposes also the *cheat* that was put upon Eve, to the *truth* that was told Mary. He opposes the virgin Eve, now designed to be a wife, to the virgin Mary, who was also espoused; and the virgin Eve deceived by an evil angel, to the virgin Mary believing a good angel. And, says he, "as Eve was seduced and forsook God, so Mary was induced to obey God, that the virgin Mary might be a [q] comforter of the virgin Eve; and that as mankind was through a virgin bound over to death, so they should be released through a virgin:

[n] Justin. Dial cum Tryph. p. 327. Paris.

[o] Page 290.

[p] Iren. lib. 5. c. 18, 19.

[q] The word which I translate *comforter* is in Latin *advocata*; from whence Bellarmine and Feuardentius conclude very absurdly in behalf of invocation of saints, though Irenæus meant what we usually understand by *advocate*. But by the fidelity of the Latin translator, in keeping to the ecclesiastical use of words, it seems evident that the Greek word in Irenæus was παράκλητος: which how it is to be translated, see M. Daille, who has largely treated this matter; and I doubt not to say, has made an end of it. De Relig. Cultus Object. p. 41, &c.

one thing being thus rightly balanced against another, the disobedience of a virgin by the obedience of a virgin." The sum of all is this; that there appeared a notable congruity in divers respects, that as Eve, a virgin, led the first man Adam into transgression, in whom all mankind fell; so the Virgin Mary brought forth him into the world, *the second Adam, the Lord from heaven*, who was to redeem all mankind. No honest man will go about to make less of these passages, but he must be a very subtle man that can make more of them.

And yet Feuardentius triumphs in this testimony, as if he had found here the primitive church and all antiquity for the invocation of the blessed Virgin. And no less satisfied he was with a like strain of Irenæus against those heretics in another place, who said, that "[r] Christ took nothing from the Virgin Mary," and by consequence that she was not really his mother, nor he really, but only seemingly, a man. Now amongst other things, Irenæus argues the contrary, from the congruity of our Saviour's being born of a virgin, that a virgin might bring as much good to the world as a virgin had done mischief; whereby it became plain, that God defeated the Devil in a congruous way; who by the virgin Eve had seduced Adam, and brought death upon his posterity. But why did not Irenæus complain that this heresy overthrew the very foundation upon which the church gave a superexcellent worship to Mary, viz. because she was the mother of God? Nay, why did not he silence this wild conceit, by alleging the worship which she every where received upon this account? Feuardentius elsewhere makes a mighty matter of Irenæus his pressing heretics with catholic tradition. Why therefore was not so obvious and convincing an argument as the catholic tradition and practice of worshipping the Virgin Mary brought forth upon this occasion? Even because there was no such tradition or practice to be alleged, as any man that is not overruled with prejudice must confess. It is a sign that ancient testimonies run very low with them, when they are fain to make much of these.

But if Irenæus forgot this argument, it is something strange that Tertullian after him should forget it too: for writing against the same stupid opinions, he uses just the argument

[r] Adv. Hær. lib. 3. c. 32, 33.

that Irenæus had done before him. "The image and similitude of God," saith he, "being captivated by the Devil, God recovered it by [s] a work that defeated the Devil in his own way. For the word that was a foundation of death had crept into Eve, being yet a virgin; and agreeably the word that should restore life was to be received by a virgin; that mankind, who by means of that sex fell into perdition, might through the same sex be recovered to salvation. Eve had believed the serpent, Mary hath believed Gabriel; the offence which the former hath committed in believing, the latter hath blotted out by believing." And what he means by "blotting out Eve's offence" is plain from what follows, that "Mary brought forth Him who was to save even his murderers, and that Christ was to come of her for the salvation of man." What Tertullian says of her beside is very little, and by the bye; as, that she was a virgin, because "Christ was said to be made of a woman;" and that being born of her, "he was therefore of the house of David;" and the like.

Clemens Alexandrinus, to illustrate a moral lesson, tells us, that "Mary was a perfect virgin after the birth of her son," and mentions a particular proof of it, which some affirmed. And further [t] he says not, that I can remember.

His scholar Origen acknowledged also the perpetual virginity of Mary: and in his homilies upon the first chapter of St. Luke, where he could not avoid speaking of her, he hath these passages: "Somebody," saith he [u], "I know not who, hath run into such a madness as to affirm that Mary was renounced by our Saviour, inasmuch as after his birth she was joined to Joseph [x]." Now if the church had then believed the story of her assumption; (which hath been so poetically described to us of late;) if the church had then, for an hundred and fifty years together, served her as the Queen of Heaven with solemn rites of worship; that man who ventured to disparage the blessed Virgin in this fashion was foolish to admiration. But if Origen knew that the church had given her these honours from the beginning, he was wise enough to have stopped this madman's mouth with that argument, or rather to

[s] Fundi operationem. Tert. de Carne Christi, c. 23. Adv. Praxeam, c. 5.
[t] Strom. lib. 7.
[u] In Ios. Hom. 7.
[x] Contempt. of Life, &c.

have said nothing of him; since nobody could need any instruction to hold him for a ridiculous fellow. But he thought fit to instruct the people how they should answer this man, and that in this manner: "If Mary was pronounced blessed in those hymns that were uttered by the instinct of the Holy Spirit, how can any man say that our Saviour denied her?"

Origen speaks very honourably of the blessed Virgin; but yet he represents her as an instance of human frailty, and one that needed forgiveness of sins as well as the apostles; and that because she was offended, as he (it seems) was persuaded, at the passion of Christ. "What," says he, "do we think that when the apostles were scandalized, the mother of our Lord was free from it?" And so he interprets those words, *A sword shall pierce through thy own soul also*, by this paraphrase, "The sword of unbelief shall pierce thy own soul, and thou shalt be smitten with the edge of doubtfulness." I doubt it will not be convenient to inquire of Origen any further.

As for Athenagoras, Minutius Felix, St. Cyprian, Arnobius, Lactantius, they have left us nothing at all concerning her; unless St. Cyprian says somewhere that Christ was conceived in the womb of a virgin, &c. But if that be all, I am sure he neglected some very inviting occasions of putting his people in mind of a great deal more, which he ought not to have neglected, if the doctrine of the primitive church concerning the blessed Virgin had been the same with that of the pretended catholic church at this day.

And so we are gotten out of the three first ages. But perhaps Athanasius makes amends for all that were before him, in the sermon upon the annunciation of the blessed Virgin. That sermon, I confess, is a very surprising thing to any man that considers there was not the least preparation for the doctrine it would pretend to establish in the foregoing ages. But then this (as well as many other things that go under the name of Athanasius) is none of his, as Bellarmine, and others of his party, (obliged by the strength of truth,) have actually confessed; and in all probability, it was written no less than 348 years after his death. In his genuine works there is more frequent mention of the Virgin than in the Fathers before him; especially in his orations against the Arians, which he

wrote about the year 360. But we must go further down to find where her worship began, for as yet there is no appearance of it.

Hilary, who wrote about the same time, says nothing new in this matter. [y] He does industriously assert the virginity of Mary, which and the like things were done by some of those that went before him: but of her worship not a word.

To conclude; the Fathers do generally speak of her without the addition of any title of honour; for the most part they call her *Mary*, sometimes *the Virgin*, the *mother of our Lord* rarely, and the *mother of God* never, I think, till the church was obliged to guard the belief of the Divine nature of Christ, by all kind of proper expressions; and even then, this honourable appellation was used, not for her sake, but to secure the right faith of our Lord's divinity, especially against the Nestorian heresy. In short, the protestants do customarily mention the virgin mother with honourable additions, beyond what the Fathers of the three first ages did. But we worship her just as they did, that is, not at all. For my own part, when I consider that she had the glorious privilege to be the mother of God [z], I should have much ado to forbear regretting the little regard wherewith some of the Fathers speak of her sometimes, but that I find our Saviour himself, in [a] those three sayings concerning her which are reported in the Gospels, not to magnify her over greatly. And the truth is, I should have wondered at that too, had not the excess of later devotion to her put me in mind, that the holy writers were guided by a spirit of prophecy, and have therefore recorded nothing that Christ said to his most holy mother, but what might be of use in such times as these.

SECT. VIII.

Let us now see whether the religion of praying to martyrs and saints, and worshipping their images and relics, has the authority of the primitive church and all antiquity. It may very well be presumed that it has not, unless we think that the Fathers preferred the other saints before the blessed Virgin. But to say the truth, though hitherto the Virgin and

[y] Hilar. Pictav. Com. in Matth. p. 497. [z] Rev. xix. 10. [a] Luke ii. 49; xi. 27, 28; John ii. 4.

the rest of the saints were equal as to any religious worship, neither she nor they being yet thought of for that purpose; yet when superstition at length began to creep into the church, the martyrs got the start of the Virgin. In process of time her worship overtopped theirs: but theirs began before her turn came. The most holy religion of the Gospel was delivered all at once; and, which is most considerable, it is the religion which God hath sealed, and so it was and is all of a piece. But the corruption of that religion coming on by degrees, as contingent occasions gave birth and growth to it, could not be regularly contrived, but would need a great deal of patching and mending to bring it to a face of uniformity.

As for praying to saints, I know not how any man can imagine that the primitive Fathers taught or used it, who considers in what terms they taught that God only was to be invocated; that they counted the worship of invocation a better sacrifice than those which had been offered to God, as the law of Moses required, and which all acknowledge were to be offered to God only; and that they argued the divinity of Christ from hence, that prayers were to be offered to him.

Irenæus tells us, that the "church did nothing by invocations of angels, or incantations to them, or any other evil curiosity." Feuardentius pretends, that this excludes evil spirits only from being invoked. But let any unprejudiced man judge by what follows: "But," says he[b], "she directs her prayers chastely, purely, and manifestly, to the Lord that made all things." Now according to Feuardentius, he should have added, "and to good spirits also." For it is a vain thing to say, that he intended to oppose those only that worshipped malicious spirits, since if this had been his intention, the plain laws of discourse had obliged him rather to omit the worship of God in this opposition, than the worship of good spirits. And doubtless upon this supposition he would have said, that "we do not use prayers and hymns to evil, but to good spirits."

I cannot but set down here the words of the church of Smyrna, in their golden epistle concerning the martyrdom of Polycarp. It seems the Jews had suggested, that if the Christians could gain his body, they would perhaps forsake

[b] Iren. lib. 2. c. 57.

Christ, and worship him (their love and reverence of that holy man, their bishop, was so well known). Against which suggestions, the Smyrneans thus declare themselves: "These men know not that we can neither forsake Christ, who suffered for the salvation of all that are saved, the innocent for the guilty, nor worship any other. Him truly, being the Son of God, we adore; but the martyrs, and disciples, and followers of the Lord, we justly love, for that extraordinary good mind which they have expressed toward their King and Master; of whose happiness God grant that we may partake, and that we may learn by their examples." This testimony of the church of Smyrna I rather produce in this place, because in two ancient manuscripts, cited by the most learned archbishop Usher, the Latin translation of their protestation runs thus: "We Christians can never forsake Christ, who vouchsafed to suffer so great things for our sins, nor give away the worship of prayer to any other[c]."

Clemens Alexandrinus defines prayer by its relation to God, in which (as Bellarmine[d] acknowledges) he was followed by divers Fathers in the fourth century. But nothing can be more plain than this passage of his: "Since there is but one good God, both we and angels pray to him alone, that those good things may be given us which we want, and those continued which we have[e]." If half so plain a testimony could have been produced out of the genuine writings of these Fathers, for praying to others besides God, as these are for praying to God alone; I fear we should have been counted very impudent in our appeals to the primitive church and the best antiquity. The same person had said not long before, "We do justly honour God by prayer, and with righteousness we send up this best and most holy sacrifice."

And I find this to have been another general notion of the worship of prayer amongst the ancients, that it was a sacrifice much better than those more sensible sacrifices, that were either offered by the Gentiles, or required by the law of Moses, and more pleasing to God. Thus says Tertullian: "We sacrifice for the health and safety of the emperor, but

[c] See Act. Usser. Pobe., or Answer to the Jesuit's Challenge, Praying to Saints.

[d] Θυσία πρὸς τὸν Θεόν.

[e] Παρ' αὐτοῦ μόνου. Strom. lib. 7. p. 724.

we do it to our God and his God; and we do it as God hath commanded, with pure prayer[f]," or purely with prayer: for so he is to be understood, inasmuch as he opposeth the purity of prayer to the sacrifices of incense and victims[g]: and therefore, says he, "we pray rather for the health of the emperor, desiring it of him who can give it." This smart writer did, in his own way, very plainly represent our doctrine in the forementioned saying: "We sacrifice," says he, "but to our God and his God." There he represents sacrifice as due to God only: "But we do it, as God hath commanded, with pure prayer." There he represents prayer as a sacrifice more excellent than that of odours and blood, which the Gentiles offered. And can any thing be more evident, than that he appropriates this sacrifice so to God, that it ought not to be given to any else? Thus also he proves against the Jews, that "we must now sacrifice to God, not earthly, but spiritual sacrifices; for it is written, *A contrite heart, and an humble heart, is a sacrifice to God*[h]; and elsewhere, *Offer the sacrifice of praise, and pay thy vows to the Most High.*" And therefore, a little after, he affirms Christ to be "the High Priest of eternal sacrifices," in opposition to those that are abolished. Nay, he says that the *pure offering*[i], foretold in Malachi, which all nations should bring, is the "simplicity of prayer from the pure conscience," which he elsewhere describes by blessing, and praise, and hymns; and so is the same with pure prayer mentioned before. This is enough to shew, that in his days the church would no more have offered invocations of prayer or praise to any but to God, than they would have offered victims to any but to him, if they had been continued in the service of the church.

And by this we may see in what sort we are to understand that offering for the martyrs which we read of in [k] Tertullian and St. Cyprian. Says Tertullian, "We make oblations for them that are departed, in memory of their birthdays," i. e. of the days wherein they were crowned with martyrdom. And thus St. Cyprian, writing to the church of Carthage concerning Celerinus, and making mention of his uncles Laurentinus and Ignatius, says[l], "We offer sacrifice for them, you may re-

[f] "Pura prece."

[g] "Odoris aut sanguinis." Tert. ad Scap. c. 2.

[h] Adv. Jud. c. 5.

[i] "Simplex oratio:" Adv. Marc. c. 1.

[k] De Corona, c. 3. De Exhort. c. 13. Demen.

[l] Cypr. Epist. 34. Rig.

member, as often as we celebrate the days upon which the martyrs suffered with an anniversary commemoration." And thus he writes to the clergy of Carthage concerning the confessors that should die in prison: "Note down the days of their death, that we may celebrate the commemorations amongst the memories of the saints[m]," &c. The meaning of which is, that they gave thanks and offered praises to God for those holy persons by name, who had constantly suffered death for the faith of Christ. These were the sacrifices they offered for the martyrs, the sacrifices of praise; not excluding what, by other authorities, is evident enough, the sacrifice of prayers for them too, and for all the departed saints, that they might at length obtain the promised resurrection. I do not say that the worship of Christians consisted only of these sacrifices: they had the [n]oblation of bread and wine besides, before the eucharist; and the representative sacrifice of our Lord's body and blood in the eucharist. It is enough that the religious invocations of the church were held to be the worship of sacrifice, and that of [o]a more excellent kind than the earthly sacrifices of Jews and Gentiles, as Tertullian calls them. And let the pretended catholics tell us to whom the worship of sacrifice should be offered but to God. They have, I confess, kept the style of the ancient church, and pretend to sacrifice to God, and to him only. But the change which they have made in the doctrine and practice of the church, hath obliged them to apply that style otherwise than the ancient church did. When they speak of offering sacrifice, as M. de Meaux does in his Exposition[p], we are, according to the use of that phrase in their writers, to understand nothing but the pretended sacrifice of the mass. But why must not the people be taught that the worship of prayers and hymns is a sacrifice too? For this was the current doctrine of the primitive church. There is a good reason for it; because they do not pay this worship to God alone, as the primitive church did.

And now, as for those passages concerning [q]oblations and sacrifices already produced, and many more to the like purpose that might be produced out of the Fathers; I do not

m Cypr. Epist. 37.

n See Mr. Mede upon Mundia purum.

o Sacrificiorum officia pottora. Adv. Marc.

p Exp. §. 3, 4.

q See Constit. Apstol. lib 7. c 3.

know how far a willing mind might go, to apply them to the sacrifice of the mass. And when that is done, it is but a little straining more, and they will interpret Gregory Nazianzen to their own mind too; who in his funeral oration upon St. Basil thus speaks of him: "And now he is in heaven, as I think, he offers sacrifices for us, and prayers for the people[r]." But I am confident Nazianzen did not so much as think that Basil said mass in heaven for him and the people.

To proceed; Origen is as express to this purpose as his master Clemens Alexandrinus. He saith[s], "We must pray to him alone that is God over all, and we must pray to the Word of God, his only begotten, and the firstborn of every creature; and we must humbly beseech him, as our High Priest, to present our prayer (for it is known to him) to his Father and the Father of them that live according to the word of God."

This is enough for one man to say in so plain a case: and yet I will add what he says about this matter from another common argument, viz. that the divinity of Christ is clearly gathered from our making prayers to him. For upon those words of the apostle, *with all that call upon the name of the Lord Jesus*, he saith[t], that "the apostle pronounces Jesus Christ to be God, in that his name is called upon;" and that "to call upon the name of the Lord, and to adore God, is one and the same thing." The reason of this, which I have ventured to offer, is, that prayer does ascribe *omnipresence*, as well as other Divine perfections, to the Being to which it is made. And this is that reason which Tertullian, as I think, hath expressed in these words: [u] that "faith offers its religion to him only; of whom it is confident, that he sees and hears every where." For by religion he mean tprayer, which is the subject of that discourse to which these words belong. Thus Novatian also[x]: If "Christ be only a man, how is he every where present to those that call upon him? since this is not the nature of man, but of God, to be present in all places!" And in the same place; if "Christ be only a man, why is a man invoked as a mediator in prayers; since the invocation of

r Ὡς οἶμαι, προσφέρων θυσίας.
s Μόνῳ γὰρ προσευκτέον τῷ ἐπὶ πᾶσι Θεῷ. Orig. contr. Cels. lib. 8.
t Orig. in Decim. ad Rom. l. 8.
u Tert. de Orat. cap. 1.
x Nov. de Trin. c. 14.

man must be judged ineffectual for the procuring of salvation?" And, to name no more, Athanasius frequently uses this kind of argument. For speaking of prayers made to the Son of God, he says[y], "the saints think it not just to invoke him to be their helper and refuge who was made" or created; and no man would pray to receive any thing from the "Fathers and the angels, or from any of the other creatures:" from whence he concludes, that because the apostle, in 1 Thess. iii. 11, does not only pray to God the Father, but also to our Lord Jesus Christ, that therefore Christ is God. It seems it was not then the way of Christians to join God and St. Michael, God and the Virgin, God and all the saints, in invocations or prayers. There were then no such things known, as confession to God, and to St. Michael, and to the blessed Virgin, and to the saints; as giving glory to the holy Trinity and to the Virgin; as saying, "Jesus, Mary, help," &c.: had any thing of this nature been done in those times, I doubt here had been a good argument lost, by which the Fathers proved Christ to be God. Nor would Athanasius have been so mere a child as to attack the Arians with an argument, to which the doctrine and practice of the church had afforded so obvious and effectual an answer.

To all which I shall add but that canon of the Laodicean synod[z], that "Christians ought not to forsake the church of God, and depart aside, and invocate angels: therefore if any man be found using this secret idolatry, let him be accursed, because he hath forsaken our Lord Jesus Christ." I make no question but if there had been occasion, saints had been put into the canon as well as angels. But then what word could they have thought of instead of saints to answer corners [*angulos*], which Crab thrust into the old Latin translation instead of angels [*angelos*], is not very easy to imagine. Concerning which pleasant forgery, see bishop Usher's Answer to the Jesuit's Challenge, p. 469, &c.

And now, if we consider the doctrine of these primitive Fathers concerning prayer, I suppose we shall not wonder that in those places where we might well have expected some instance of praying to saints, or some recommendation of it, (if any such practice had been amongst them,) that, I say, there is

[y] Athan. Orat. contra Arian. n. 4 [z] Synod. Laod. cap. 35.

nothing at all, no not the least intimation of it: not where [a] St. Cyprian so vehemently admonished those that were fallen in persecution to pray to God for themselves, and to entreat the brethren to do so too: not where [b] Tertullian describes the humiliations and prostrations of the penitents; in both which places, one would have expected that the intercession of the saints and martyrs should have been implored: not where Justin Martyr describes the service of the church in her religious assemblies; nor in any of the ancient apologies, nor in any ancient account of the religious worship of Christians; no not in the Apostolical Constitutions [c], (though a later work than it pretends to be,) where the order of the church's service is very particularly described. We are not to wonder at it, I say, for the declared doctrine of the church was against it.

SECT. IX.

As for the worshipping, or, as M. de Meaux calls it, the honouring of images, we might spare the pains of inquiring what the sense of the ancient church was concerning it; it is so hard to believe that they should worship the images of the saints, who did not so much as pray or give any religious worship to the saints themselves. But this practice is so far from having the countenance of the primitive church and all antiquity, that in the best ages there were men of great name in the church that did not believe so much as the art of imagery and picture lawful to be practised by a Christian. Saith Clemens Alexandrinus; "We are plainly forbidden to meddle with that cheating art: for the prophet [Moses] saith, *Thou shalt not make the likeness of any thing either in heaven or in earth* [d]." Tertullian hath a great deal to this purpose in his discourse of idolatry. But those words are, to my thinking, very remarkable: "Well did the same God require the likeness of a serpent to be made by an extraordinary command, who by his law forbad the making of any likeness. If thou observest the same God, thou hast his law; *Make no likeness.* If also thou lookest to the precept of making an image afterward, do thou also imitate Moses: make no image whatsoever against the law, unless God also command thee in particular

[a] Cypr. de Laps. p. 177.
[b] Tert. de Pœnitentia, c. 9.
[c] Apost. Constit. lib. 7, 8.
[d] Protrept. ad Gentes.

so to do[e]." Which words are so plain and full, that they leave no room for that frivolous pretence, that these Fathers intended no other images but those of the heathen gods. And that instance of the brasen serpent, which was no idol till the Jews made it one, clearly shews the contrary.

But if it be said that the authority of these men is to go for nothing, because they were mistaken in condemning image-work so universally as they did; I grant that their zeal against image-worship transported them beyond the bounds of reason; especially Tertullian, who in the foresaid book tells us, that "artificers of statues and images, and all carved and engraven works of this kind, were brought into the world by the Devil[f]." But this I say, that if images had in those days been used in Christian churches, so much as to excite the devotion of the faithful, much more to receive their adoration; neither would these Fathers have condemned the making of images, nor, if they had, would the church have borne with so great an outrage upon their doctrine and practice. Some one at least would have appeared in behalf of the catholic church, as Melchior Canus has done in behalf of the Roman church against the Eliberine council in this matter; who sticks not to say[g], that "their law for taking away images was not only imprudently, but impiously established." The censure which he so long after passed upon that council had been fastened upon these men presently, by more than one, as good as Canus, if image-worship had but been allowed then, as it is now established in the Roman communion. They were not so tame as to suffer their worship to be affronted by their own members without taking notice of it. But the truth is, the monuments of the ancient[h] church afford us no accounts of images anywhere, but either in libraries, or [i]at a house door, or in the holes of heretics, or in the temples of false gods. We read indeed of one picture of Christ, or some saint, which Epiphanius found in a curtain of the church of Anablatha; but he took it down, and tore it in pieces. Such accounts as this are not for the credit of image-worship; which indeed came into the church at the tail of other corruptions. And the Fathers

e Tert. de Idol. c. 5, 6.
f Ibid. c. 2.
g Canus, loc. Theol. l. 5. c. 4.
h Euseb. Hist. lib. 7. c. 18. Iren. l. 1. c. 24.
i Concerning the image of the Syrophœnician woman, &c., see Dr. Stillingfleet against T. G. p. 253.

are so unanimous and positive against it, that I will shut up this matter with the testimony of a great many Fathers in one testimony, viz. that of the Eliberine council, held about the beginning of the fourth age: "It is our pleasure that pictures ought not to be in the church, lest that which is worshipped or adored should be painted upon walls [k]."

As for the relics of saints and martyrs, we hear of none for the three first ages but that of bodies, nor any thing concerning them, but that they were interred with all possible respect that could be expected from men, and which is more, from Christians. The honour which, by the custom of the world, we learn is proper to the bodies of the dead, is to give them a decent interment. This was maintained and cherished by the ancient [l] Christians, not only because reasonable souls once lived in those bodies which they committed to the ground, which was an inducement common to man; but because also those bodies and souls were to be once again joined at the resurrection, which was an inducement proper to Christians. It was the same kind of honour which they shewed to the bodies of martyrs, though heightened with the expressions of a more than ordinary love. Thus, after the martyrdom of St. Stephen, *devout men carried him out to be buried, and made great lamentation over him* [m].

The like account did the Smyrneans give of their disposing the bones of Polycarp, which they reckoned "more valuable than precious stones, more precious than gold." M. de Meaux sure would not desire a further progression of love and honour. But with this degree they contented themselves; for, say they [n], "we committed them to burial where it was usual."

And thus Pius, the first of that name, bishop of Rome: "Take care," saith he [o], "of the bodies of the holy martyrs, as of God's members, after that manner that the apostles took care of Stephen's."

Thus the clergy of Rome, in their Epistle to the clergy of Carthage, when St. Cyprian was absent: to speak of "a matter of very great consequence. If the bodies of martyrs or

[k] Concil. Elib. can. 36.

[l] Orig. contra Cels. lib. 5. Tertull. de Anima.

[m] Συνεκόμισαν, Acts viii. 2.

[n] Ὀστᾶ αὐτοῦ ἀπεθέμεθα, ὁποῦ καὶ ἀκόλουθον ἦν. Sm. Epist. supr.

[o] Cura, quemadmodum curaverunt. *Curare* here is the same with κήδεσθαι, κηδεύειν. Pius Epist. 2. tom. 1. Con. See Cypr. Ep. 37. Cypr. Epist. 2.

others be not buried, it is a very dangerous fault in those that are to look after this business." So that in those days it should seem to be a charge intrusted to select persons, that the bodies of martyrs and other Christians should be buried; and this not only at Carthage, but at Rome too.

But why should I multiply testimonies in so plain a case? Had the relics of martyrs and saints been worshipped in those best times as they were afterward, how comes it to pass that in all the monuments of those times no mention of any such thing is to be found? When the trade of relics began in the church, there was noise enough made of it, and the best authors acquaint us with the news: but it had been no news, if the trade had been begun before. Why was no such thing objected to the Christians, by their watchful enemies, for three hundred years together? For we no sooner come to hear of stories of relics in the church, but we find the pagans at the heels of this innovation, and upbraiding the Christians with the superstition of it. Why meet we not with some intimation of laying up relics in churches under the altar? There was room enough for so considerable and necessary a circumstance, (and the church of Rome makes more than a circumstance of it,) in that particular description of the fashion and ornaments of the church built by Paulinus, bishop of Tyre[p]. Why meet we with no translations of bodies from one place to another, for their greater honour? Perhaps we shall be told of the men from the East, that came to Rome, and challenged the bodies of St. Peter and St. Paul, as of right belonging to them; and of their carrying them two miles out of town, to a place called *catacumbæ*, and all the other adventures that Gregory tells upon this business. But then there will arise a great question, whether we are to believe with [q] Gregory that they were eastern believers; or with [r] Baronius, that they were thievish Greeks. Or rather it will be no question, that the whole relation is fabulous from one end to the other.

In short, why have we all this time no account of miracles wrought by relics, of carrying them about in processions, of exposing them to receive the adorations of the people, of wearing them as a special security against spiritual and tem-

[p] Euseb. Hist. lib. 20 c. 4. [q] Greg. lib. 3 Ep. 30. [r] Baron. A. D. 221. N. 4.

poral evils, or of any instance of this kind of religion? I answer, It is a fond thing to imagine, that the religion of worshipping the relics of the saints should be in use amongst them who gave no religious worship to the saints themselves.

But it is not to be wondered at, that they who pray to the souls of the saints and martyrs, who are so far absent from us that they hear us not, should be guilty of another weakness, and worship their bones, and other relics, which neither hear nor see, though they are present.

This account of the sentiments of the three first ages, and indeed of the better half of the fourth, we gather from the writings of the Fathers, and from the undoubted monuments of those times. Monsieur de Meaux knew that these things had been diligently expounded by those of the reformation, and particularly by M. Daillé. And what does he oppose to this, to save his pretences to all antiquity harmless? Says he, "Without any further examination what might be the sentiments of the Fathers of the three first ages, I will content myself with what M. Daillé is pleased to grant, who allows us so many great men who taught the church in the fourth age." Now M. Daillé neither made any such allowance, nor had he any reason to make it. But suppose he had, must all that he had written concerning the sense of the three first ages about the object of worship go for nothing? If this example of writing is fit to be followed, I know not why I should give myself any further trouble, and not rather conclude thus[s]: That without any further examination what may be the sentiments of the Fathers of the following age, I shall content myself with what some great men of the Roman church are pleased to grant, and which is evidently proved against all the rest that deny it, viz. that the Fathers of the three first ages must be allowed to us; and so leave it to the world to judge who has most reason to be content.

SECT. X.

But having undertaken to give some account of the beginnings of the present superstitions of the church of Rome in the matter of saint-worship, and the adoration of the images and relics of the saints; and because it is impossible to do this,

[s] Exp. p. 5. [t] Peresius de Tradition. par. 3. &c.

without going beyond the first ages, till we come to the reign of Julian; I must venture beyond him, and consider the state of the church toward the latter end of the fourth century, with respect to these questions. Some of the Romanists pretend that antiquity to be on their side which I have shewn is with us. But as far as I can perceive, they all pretend to be very confident they shall carry it thus high at least; and M. de Meaux takes it for granted, that we begin to allow them those later Fathers. I shall endeavour to represent the case as impartially as if I were yet to choose my opinion; and I am very much mistaken, if it will not appear in conclusion, (though there is a little more colour for their challenging the latter end of the fourth age, in favour of their doctrine and practices in these things, than for appealing to higher antiquity,) that upon a true consideration of the grounds upon which they challenge these later Fathers as their own, it had been more advisable for them to have come down much lower to find precedents whereby to justify themselves. It had been a very ancient custom of the church for Christians to meet at the cemeteries, or burying-places of the martyrs, and the rest of the faithful, there to celebrate anniversary commemorations of the martyrs. Thus the church of Smyrna[u] having intimated that they had buried the body of St. Polycarp in the usual place, they added, that in "that place, God willing, they should assemble together to celebrate the birthday of his martyrdom with all the joy they could express:" and the reason of this custom they express in this manner; "both to commemorate those who had already undergone the trial of martyrdom, and to exercise and to prepare those that were to follow for the like conflicts." But they did not meet here to celebrate the memories of the martyrs only, but at other times also for the celebration of Divine service. For we find that [x] Valerian and Gallien forbad the Christians to celebrate assemblies, or to meet at those places which they called *cemeteries*; which passages, and the like, imply, that it was ordinary for them to assemble there: and it is not improbable that they used those places for more privacy, when there was danger of persecution; and that the prohibition of assemblies in those cemeteries was the utmost strictness of prohibiting their assemblies:

[u] Ep. Smyr. ubi supra. [x] Euseb. Hist. lib. 7. c. 11.

for it is plain that they had their churches besides in cities, which they built and repaired according to their ability. And so in that favourable time between [y] Gallien and Diocletian, we find that they added new churches in every city to those which they had before. But whether they were wont to meet at the cemeteries (at other times besides the anniversary days of the martyrs) for privacy, or perhaps for the commodiousness of those places, when they did not consult privacy, as some think; or whether it was out of special respect to the memories of those martyrs, I shall not need to dispute; for it is a clear case, that they fervently loved those excellent men and women, and honoured their memories, who had laid down their lives for the testimony of Jesus. This was one reason of celebrating their anniversary commemorations, in which they did what highly became them, and carefully kept themselves within this compass, that religious worship was to be given to God only.

But when, under Constantine the Great, the profession of Christianity was not only safe, but the way to honour and greatness, the memories of the saints more frequented than they had formerly been, and stately churches were built over their sepulchres; and the emperor, the clergy, and the people, seemed to vie with one another who should express the greatest zeal in carrying on so pious a work; which extraordinary fervour, considering the time, was not to be wondered at; for the church was but now delivered, not only out of a raging persecution, but from the apprehension of any more, and therefore could not but reflect upon the martyrs with all tenderness of affection. And since they were not now alive to partake in the prosperous and triumphant state of the church, it was natural to give their names and memories all that share in it which was possible to be given; especially since the present peace and glory of the church was, under God, so deeply owing to the noble examples of their fortitude and patience. The commemorations of the martyrs had formerly a double end—to do honour, and express a dear affection to them; and withal, to prepare and to excite the virtue of those that were to suffer afterward; which latter end, without all doubt, was the most necessary: but there being now so

[y] Euseb. Hist. lib. 8. c. 1.

little occasion for that, the piety of these prosperous times ran out more plentifully in doing honours to those champions of Christ, that had borne the heat of the day, and left this age to enjoy that victory and sweet peace wherewith God had now crowned his persecuted church.

And as this zeal was no more than what might be expected from human affection, raised by Christian piety; so if men could have told where to stop, it had been as much for the honour of Christianity, as the excesses to which it grew afterwards were a disgrace to it.

From Constantine's coming to the empire, to the reign of Julian, there passed above fifty years: and in this time the reverence of the martyrs was grown to some excess beyond primitive examples: for it was not only thought reasonable to build churches over their sepulchres, but it should seem there were many that thought their prayers would speed the better for being made over the tombs of the martyrs; and not content with this, they began at length to search for their bones; and it grew to be the piety of this age to disturb the ashes of the dead, which it was the piety of the former ages to leave in their graves without disturbance. But as yet their prayers were directed to God only: we have yet no examples of calling upon the saints and martyrs. Julian himself, who aggravated the respect shewn to the martyrs to the utmost, could not charge them with this; and he very well understood their practice. But, says he [z], "since Jesus has said that sepulchres are full of uncleanness, why do you call upon God over sepulchres?" It is true, he also charged them with worshipping the martyrs, and upbraided them, that having forsaken the religious rites of the Gentiles, they had gone over to the Jews, and yet had not kept to their religion neither, which had been something. For "then," says he [a], "you would have worshipped one God instead of many, and not one man [Jesus], or rather many miserable men;" meaning the martyrs. But this was only a spiteful construction of the custom of Christians, in paying their devotions to God over the sepulchres of the martyrs.

Not long after Julian comes Eunapius, a most bitter wretch; by whose censures we may easily observe, that the devotion of

[z] Apud Cyril. l. 10. contra Julian. p. 335. [a] Id. lib. 6. p. 201.

Christians towards the martyrs was still growing to a greater height. I perceive he is cited both by protestants and papists; by protestants, to shew the beginnings of that superstition we complain of; by papists, to shew that the invocation of saints and the worship of relics was at least so ancient. This infidel, speaking of monks, (a sort of men which this age first brought forth,) says[b], that they "heaped together bones and skulls of men that had been punished for many crimes, holding them for gods; and prostrating themselves before such as had been chastised by order of the courts of justice; and believing the better of themselves for being polluted at their sepulchres. So that they who were but mere slaves, and those none of the best, but soundly lashed, and carrying still the scars and marks of their villainy in their very ghosts, are now called martyrs, and made the ministers and messengers of prayer to the gods." Thus did the base villain reproach the blessed martyrs of Jesus, in contempt of the monks, and indeed of all the Christians in those times. For though it should seem that the trade of relics was chiefly driven by the monks, yet it is evident that great account was made of relics in almost all places; which, together with the daily resort of devout Christians to the memories of the martyrs, gave occasion to this infidel thus to upbraid them: for no man will believe all to be true which he here charges even the monks with. A malicious enemy always says the worst that he has any colour or pretence to say; and if such occasions and pretences had been afforded by the ancient Christians, as by these, we should certainly have heard the same objections from Lucian or Celsus, or some one pagan writer of those times, who were as able, as spiteful, and vigilant adversaries as Julian and Eunapius.

But whereas Eunapius pretended that these monks called the martyrs "ministers and messengers of their prayers;" he might possibly have no other reason for it but the common observation, that Christians went to the sepulchres of the saints, there to make their prayers. For although they directly applied themselves to none but God, when they were there; yet the choosing of those places for their devotions, especially with a profession of hoping to speed the better for so doing, was occasion enough to Eunapius to say, that they

[b] Eunapius in vita Ædesii.

made the martyrs, "the ministers and messengers of their prayers." But for ought any man can tell, Eunapius might come to understand that these monks did, what I question not was the custom of some Christians towards the latter end of this age; that is, that they called to the martyrs at their memories, as if they were present there; of which I shall give a further account in its proper place. It is certain, that many miracles were said to be done upon prayers made where the relics of the martyrs were; that is, at their memories.

And some thereupon believed that they were done at their intercession, and joining their own prayers with the prayers of the Christians that came thither. In which they were more confirmed by some confident reports of visions and apparitions of the [c] martyrs to those that had obtained their suits. Now of those who believed the martyrs were within hearing, it is very likely that some called to them with an *Ora pro nobis*; and then no wonder that Eunapius charged the monks with raking for dead men's bones, and making dead men "the messengers of their prayers."

As for the miracles said to be done in those times, they are urged by the Romanists as an invincible argument of God's approving the honour that was given to the saints and their relics, in that age of the church. But I wish they would attend to what St. Augustin says, who, after a pretty large account of miracles that were wrought in his time, and some too at the memories of martyrs, plainly says, that whether they were wrought by the ministry of martyrs or angels, (for that he knew not,) they were wrought to give testimony to that "faith for which the martyrs died [d];" and particularly to the resurrection of Christ, and to our resurrection at the last day. There is no reason to suppose that every circumstance of the devotion of Christians that received miraculous relief must be attested by those miracles which God wrought in further confirmation of the truth of Christianity. God has made use even of wicked men for the working of miracles: and I cannot understand why a miracle may not be wrought in behalf of a sincere man, without approving his weakness, any more than the other's wickedness is approved by God's making use of him

[c] Aug. de Cura pro Mortuis, c. 16. [d] Aug. de Civ. Dei, lib. 22. c. 9.

to testify the truth. But I would be content to let them use this argument from miracles, without contradiction, if they would extend it no further than in favour of that use of relics which we yet meet with. In the fourth age they ransacked all places for them, and when, as they thought, they had got them, they put them in fine linen, or in curious boxes and repositories, and laid them up in the church. But whatever good they expected from these treasures, they did not yet worship them; they did not incense them, and expose them to receive the adorations of the people. Vigilantius, it seems, had asked, with some derision, "Why dost thou kiss and adore a little dust put up in fine linen?" To which St. Hierom [e], that went as high as any in the age for honouring relics, answered, "Who, O thou giddy-brained man, ever adored the martyrs? who has taken a man for God?" Indeed St. Hierom thought that holy relics made the devils roar for very pain; but yet he did not think that they were to be adored [f], no not the martyrs themselves, but God only. We could wish that all superstition were banished from amongst Christians; but if the church of Rome would be content with such things as St. Hierom [g] blames in some "silly men and religious women, that had a zeal, but not according to knowledge, viz. burning wax-candles by daylight in honour of the martyrs," we would be content too; for these are tolerable faults, and such as should not break the peace, though they were better mended. I would say to any contentious man what St. Hierom [h] said to Vigilantius, "What dost thou lose by it," if others are a little foolish?

I confess, I should beg of these gentlemen, for the honour of our religion, and of the testimony of miracles, not to pretend the miracles of the fourth and fifth ages as a testimony to every punctilio of honour done in those times to the relics of the saints, and to the opinion which some conceived of them. And as I said before, it would be more discreetly done to let those miracles go, as St. Austin did, for a notable confirmation of the truth of that religion for which those martyrs died; by whose dead bodies God was pleased to do some wonderful things. But it is by no means advisable to stretch them in

[e] Hieron. adv. Vigil. tom. 2. p. 155. [f] Ibid. [g] Ibid. [h] Ibid.

favour of some other things; whereof the lighting of candles for the martyrs may go for one, and the unwillingness of some of them to build churches, unless they could get relics to lay there, for another; and the scattering of relics in little pieces up and down, may pass for a third; and stealing them, for a fourth; which, I know not how, came to be excused at least, as an effect of great and religious zeal, by some men of no mean note. I do not think such things as these are very easy to be defended; and therefore it were much better that miracles were not brought in to justify them. But least of all should they be urged in favour of that kind of worship which the church of Rome now gives them; and not only to the bodies, bones, or ashes, but to the girdles, slippers, and little utensils of the saints and martyrs; which kind of things anciently were not thought of. God wrought miracles by the hands of St. Paul and the rest of the apostles, when they were alive. Now if we had their bones, or some pieces of them, and God should be pleased to work miracles by them still; there would be, I am confident, no more reason, upon this account, to give their relics any religious worship, now the apostles are dead, than there was to worship the apostles themselves upon the same account when they were alive. Moreover, God wrought miracles by the brasen serpent; and yet when the people had fallen to burn incense to it, it was broken to pieces, to his great honour, who opposed a zeal with knowledge, to the blind zeal of the people.

But to deal freely, I am not fully satisfied that these miracles, by the bodies of saints and martyrs, were half so frequent as the noise that was made of them in this age, or in the next, would make us believe. I more than fear that those times were too credulous, or that the writings of those Fathers have met with more foul play than has been yet discovered, though no small discoveries of that kind have been made since the reformation. It is some prejudice against the credibility of those relations, that in the three first ages we hear nothing of miracles wrought by relics; which we are not to wonder at, because they lay quiet in their graves; and the ancient church was so little concerned in this religion of relics, that the bodies of martyrs that suffered under [1] Diocletian and Licinius, that

[1] Ambros. de Exhort. ad Virg. Sozom. lib. 9. c. 2.

is, at the end of the third, and the beginning of the fourth age, lay undiscovered, till chance or pretended revelations brought them to light; which is a manifest argument that the ancient church knew nothing of these matters, and that they had their beginning in the declension of the fourth age. Again, if the bodies of martyrs ordinarily discovered themselves by a gift of miracles, I wonder how it came to be so ordinary a thing to counterfeit relics as it was. For who would dare to put off the bones of a malefactor for the bones of a martyr, if it was known that true relics would distinguish themselves from false by true miracles? And yet St. Austin himself complains of a multitude of cheating fellows in his time, "that[k] were scattered up and down in the habit of monks, wandering about from province to province, sent no whither, fixed nowhere, staying nowhere; some of which professed the trade of selling the bones of martyrs, if you will believe they were martyrs' bones." It would require a volume to shew the boldness that was taken in after-times. God has given to a man but one head and one pair of hands; but the religion of relics has found more than one apiece for many of the saints and martyrs: and when they all work miracles, I must needs believe that some of them are counterfeit miracles; and if I can yet discern no difference, I would know why they should not all go for counterfeit. For when God works miracles, they are too plain, for the most part, to be denied, even by those whose interest it is to deny them.

But when I consider St. Chrysostom's judgment in the case, I must confess myself to be under a mighty prejudice against the credibility of most relations of this sort that went in that age. I well remember that he somewhere gives express caution against listening after miracles: but in one place, never to be forgotten, very pertinently to the occasion of his discourse, he argues in this manner[l]: "Because *now* there are no miracles wrought, do not thou take this for an argument that none were wrought *then*, [in the apostles' days:] for then it was profitable that they should be wrought; but now it is profitable they should not be wrought." But "how," says he, "does it come to pass, that signs should be

[k] Aug. de Opere Monach. c. 28. [l] Chrys. Hom. 6. in 1 Cor. ii.

profitable then, and not so now?" Then he shews that the continuance of miracles would lessen the rewardableness of faith; and "for this reason," says he, "they are not now wrought." And "that this is the truth, you may see by what our Lord said to Thomas: *Blessed are they who have not seen, and yet believed.* By how much therefore a more convincing miracle is shewn, by so much is the praise and reward of faith lessened: wherefore, if now also miracles were done, the same inconvenience would follow." But for a further answer, he adds, that although they had now no miracles, yet several predictions had been accomplished, which was a continued confirmation of the truth of Christianity; and moreover, that the good lives and examples of Christians were now more necessary for the conviction of unbelievers, than miracles: for, says he, "it is the want of primitive sanctity, rather than of miracles, which makes men still remain in their unbelief."

Which testimony of so judicious a man is a plain argument that miracles were at least very rare in his time; and that every martyr's bones did not do the same wonders that Babylas his bones were said to have done in Julian's time.

I may therefore be well excused, if I impute that noise of miracles, which was so loud in this and the next age, in great part to the credulity of the age, and to the difficulty of standing against that torrent of zeal for the honour of the martyrs, which had carried most men already beyond the bounds of antiquity.

What shall a man make of that story which St. Hierom tells of Hilarion's relics? How Hesychius, a holy man, ventured his life to steal the body of Hilarion the monk, out of the garden of Cyprus, where he was buried, to carry it to Palestine; and how Constantia took it so to heart, that she died upon it. For this religious woman "was wont," it seems, "to watch whole days and nights at his sepulchre; and for the helping of her prayers, to talk with him as if he was present[m]." I should think it is not much for the credit of religion, to represent a holy man plundering a grave, and a holy woman breaking her heart for the loss of the body: but if we must believe the story, miracles followed the stolen body; and yet they tarried in the place from whence it was stolen: so

[m] Hieron. de Vita Hilarionis, tom. 1. p. 98. Colon.

that Hesychius indeed, and they of Palestine, were considerable gainers; but Constantia was not so great a loser as she thought. For thus the relation goes on: "We see to this day a wonderful contention between those of Palestine and those of Cyprus; one pretending to his body, the other to his spirit. And yet in both places there are great miracles done every day, but more in the garden of Cyprus, and that perhaps because he loved that place best."

If miracles were done in both places, I am pretty well satisfied that God did not thereby intend to demonstrate either the clearness of Hesychius or the discretion of Constantia in this business, nor approve the violent passion of either of them for relics. I do not deny but they might both of them be holy persons, but it was not for such things as these; and if this part of their story had been omitted, their reputation for sanctity had lost nothing by it. What therefore was it that God testified by these miracles? I answer, with all submission, that he testified the truth of that religion in which Hilarion died; of that religion for which the martyrs died, the most holy religion which was first taught by Jesus, then by the apostles, then by the primitive ages of Christianity after the apostles; not of any sentiments or practices, which neither the holy Jesus taught, nor his apostles; and which the primitive church was a stranger to. This I am sure I have learned from St. Austin[n] in the place before-mentioned, who makes the testimony of those miracles that were wrought at the memories of the martyrs, to aim at nothing but the confirmation of the faith for which they suffered. And if I should say, that they who can be content with the old religion, may and ought to be content also with the old miracles, I should say no other thing than what I could justify by his authority: and which is something more, that we are now to try doctrines, not by new miracles, but by the scriptures, which we are sure deliver to us the will of God testified by miracles. But if God is pleased to add new miracles, out of his abundant goodness, I do not doubt but such miracles are a confirmation of the old religion, as St. Austin[o] tells us those were, which God wrought at the memories of the martyrs. But those miracles

[n] Aug. de Unit. Eccles. c. 16. [o] De Civitat. Dei, lib. 22. c. 9.

did by no means canonize the weakness of any holy person, in the matter of martyrs or saints, and relics; not the indiscretion of Hesychius or Constantia; nor did they give any authority at all to such examples.

I suppose the gentlemen of the church of Rome will grant this without any trouble; but I question whether they may not be displeased at the producing of this story, which, without any more ado, looks so like a satire upon the great author from whom I had it. But what a hard case is ours! Monsieur de Meaux and the pretended catholics think to bear us down (who honour the relics of the saints no otherwise than the truly primitive church did) by the authority of the later Fathers that lived towards the end of the fourth age. It has been often shewn, that the judgment and practice of that age, in the matter of relics, is very different from what we now see in the church of Rome. But the argument is still urged upon us, as if nothing had been said to it. What have we therefore to do, but to shew that so far as there is any agreement between the church of Rome, and that age of the church in the use of relics, they should urge it very modestly, and without boasting. We do profess a reverence for those excellent men, as M. de Meaux grants; we acknowledge their sanctity and learning, and we praise God for the benefits which the church hath received by their means. But we do not think their authority equal to that of the apostles, or of the Fathers of the three first ages. And we are very sorry that the importunity of our adversaries puts us upon a necessity of confessing, that these great men (as M. de Meaux deservedly calls them) did, in the heat of their concern for relics, sometimes say and do such little things as plainly shewed they were but men. We had been very glad if our English Romanists would not have done this part of the controversy into English, nor obliged us to take off that veil a little, wherewith we have covered the least commendable characters of these excellent men. Nay, we have that reverence for their sanctity and learning, that we are still very willing to believe their writings to have been corrupted in those places which afford this kind of stories. And though St. Hierom affirms that he wrote the life of Hilarion, yet I must confess this is so weak a part of it which I have mentioned, that I am sometimes almost persuaded that

somebody has been making bold to mend him. I am sure there appears such a spirit of superstition and credulity in these passages, at the end of St. Hilarion's life, of superstition in the persons spoken of, and of credulity in the relator, that St. Hierom is a great deal more beholden to them that cannot be satisfied they are his, than to those that can.

But to proceed: I have already observed, that the affection of this age to the martyrs was expressed by a frequent and continual resort to their tombs or memories: and that when Christians obtained the deliverance or relief which they sought, it was believed to be in great part the effect of the martyrs' favour with God; which in many persons grew into a persuasion, that the martyrs were present at their [q] memories. And in this persuasion they were confirmed by apparitions, which were at least believed to be seen there, since it gave occasion to some questions then, and to a great controversy afterward, whether they were the souls of the martyrs, or whether they were angels that appeared.

But the great question is, whether in those applications to the memories of their martyrs they called upon God only, or the martyrs also. For here it is that the pretended catholics must find colour of thus much antiquity, if any where. For their appeals to the apostrophes of some of the Fathers in their panegyrical orations upon the martyrs deserve no consideration. If indeed the faithful were wont to call upon the martyrs at their memories, this has some appearance of an argument for the pretended catholics.

I shall therefore first lay down the fact, remembering all along that it is the duty of an honest man to deliver things as they appear to him, and not to attempt the defence even of truth, but only with such arguments as he is well satisfied of the truth of himself. But when the fact is stated, I shall not envy the best advantages that our adversaries can make of it.

That account which St. Austin [r] gives of the tailor that had lost his cloak, and went to the twenty martyrs to pray for another, has been often produced as a sufficient demonstration that the practice of that age was to call upon the martyrs themselves.

[q] Aug. de Cura pro Mortuis, c. 16. [r] Ad viginti martyres oravit.

But to this it is answered, on the other side, that no more can be certainly concluded from hence, than that the tailor went to the memory of the twenty martyrs, and there prayed to God: as it is said of others, that they went to the memory of St. Stephen[s], and there prayed that God would give them what they wanted; which is a defensible interpretation of such passages. For the application that was made to the martyrs by going to their memories or churches, and the hope of prevailing by their intercessions, did not necessarily imply any invocation of the martyrs: but the supplicant believing them to be present at their memories, and to observe the prayers that were made to God there, might hope for the benefit of their intercession, without speaking to them. As for St. Austin himself, what his opinion was concerning the presence of the martyrs, I shall shew in another place.

But some of St. Chrysostom's homilies are produced with no little assurance, to shew, not only that the saints were invocated at their memories, but that he approved it too. And indeed St. Chrysostom's authority in a doubtful matter would bear a little boasting: that age did not afford a man superior to him in true judgment, perhaps not his equal. But then it is but a fair request, that those homilies be not obtruded upon us for his, of which it is very doubtful whether they be his or not: those, for instance, to the people of Antioch; the Greek copies whereof could not be found in any ancient library. I interpose this, not for the service of a cause, but for the honour of St. Chrysostom, than whom no man abounds more with exhortations to pray to God upon such considerations as these: "Thou mayest always and incessantly call upon God, and shalt meet with no difficulty; for there is no need of doorkeepers to introduce thee, of stewards or procurators, of guards or friends: but when thou comest by thyself, then will he most of all hear thee, even when thou beseechest none else. We do not so effectually incline him, when we entreat by others, as when we do it by ourselves[t]." How this can be reconciled with two or three passages, (which, if they be his, do manifestly imply his approbation of calling upon the martyrs at

[s] Visum est ut ibi ad memoriam S. Stephani, et illic apertius posset orari, ut Deus illi daret. *De Civ. Dei*, lib. 22, cap. 8.

[t] Chrys. in 1 Psal.

their memories,) I cannot for my part understand; especially that in the conclusion of the homily upon Bernix, &c., which I shall examine by and by. For to avoid contention about a matter not necessary to the cause in hand, I will proceed upon that testimony, as if it were St. Chrysostom's. But whatever St. Chrysostom's opinion was concerning the thing itself, I think it cannot reasonably be denied, that we have his testimony that it was done: for describing the magnificence of the monuments of the saints, which were "more splendid than the palaces of kings, not only for the greatness and beauty of their building, but, which was more, for the great resort of devout people thither[u];" he goes on thus: "For thither even he that is clothed with purple goes to embrace their monuments, and laying by his stateliness, he stands entreating the saints that they would intercede with God for him; and he that wears a crown desires the patronage of a tentmaker and a fisherman who died long since." I cannot approve Chamier's rendering this place, who supposes the emperor is here brought in, [x]not entreating, but only needing the intercession of the saints. His criticism is too subtle, and does not well accord with the place. But be that as it will, I must confess a few intimations of the fact will serve to make me conclude, that very many devout people did, besides their prayers to God, which they made at the memories of the martyrs, entreat also of the martyrs themselves the benefit of their intercessions to God for them; and that because it was generally believed that they were present at their memories.

For if such an opinion should prevail amongst any considerable number of Christians any where, that the souls of martyrs or other saints were to be conversed with in any certain place, where the people could come within their hearing; it is hardly to be imagined that all, or indeed the most, should restrain themselves from going thither to desire their prayers. And their guides, who themselves believed the presence of the martyrs, would, in all likelihood, be more forward to commend than to reprove them for it, unless they should be well aware of the ill consequences it might produce. And therefore I do not wonder that this new conceit, of the presence of the mar-

[u] Chrys. in 2 Epist. ad Corinth. vers. fin.

[x] δεόμενος, δεῖται.

tyrs at their memories, should carry the Christians of those times thither very frequently, and many of them to desire the martyrs to pray for them. This persuasion helped forward the devotion of the age, and was apparently countenanced by some of the Fathers, and it should seem was winked at by all; only St. Austin seemed to doubt of it, as we shall see presently.

But St. Basil made no question of it, and therefore manifestly approved the practice that was grounded upon it. For thus he speaks concerning the memory of the forty martyrs: "Here," says he[y], "a religious woman is found praying for her children, and desiring a safe return for her husband that is abroad, and recovery for her sick husband." And then he adds, "Let your prayers be made with the martyrs." I know this passage enforceth no more, than that the prayers made in those places to God would excite the martyrs to join their intercessions with those of the devout Christian. And perhaps St. Basil seems to approve this way, more than calling upon the martyrs themselves; because he says, "Let your prayers be made with (not *to*) the martyrs." But that some Christians did speak to the martyrs too, and were not reproved for it, is, I think, very plain, from what St. Basil says in his oration upon Mamas the martyr: "You remember the martyr," says he, "as many of you as have enjoyed him in dreams; as many of you as coming to this place have had his help towards your prayers; as many of you as having called to him by name[z], have found him present by his works; as many travellers as he hath brought home again," &c. For here I cannot but think that Mamas his being called by name signifies more than a bare wish that he would pray for those that are spoken of; especially considering how very natural it was for a belief of the presence of the martyrs in some places to breed the custom of addressing to them, as a man would do to his friend that is within the compass of hearing; so that I will not go about to put any other construction upon these words than this plain one, that some of St. Basil's auditors had called to Mamas by name to pray for them, and to assist them in the procuring of that which they had desired of God, or were about to desire of him.

y Basil. in 40 Martyr. z Ὀνόματι κλήσεις. Basil. Homil. 26. de S. Mam.

And "here" (to use the words of the excellent bishop Usher [a]) "a man may easily discern the breeding of a disease, and as it were the grudgings of that ague, that brake out afterwards into a pestilential fever."

I am not insensible what colours this plain and honest dealing may afford to those of the Roman communion, who do not seek for truth, nor are willing that others should find it. What will they now say, but that we begin to confess "the establishment of the invocation of saints in the fourth age?" Monsieur de Meaux has said it already upon less occasion given. But we cannot help it, if our concessions be misrepresented by the artifices of some of them, and superficially looked upon by the rest. For my own part, I had rather another man should make a disingenuous advantage of my dealing truly in defence of the truth, than go about to take away from him the occasion of using a pious fraud, by being guilty of a pious fraud myself.

But I will now be bold to say, that there is so vast a difference between the practice of some Christians in the fourth age, who recommended themselves to the prayers of the martyrs; and between the invocation of saints, which is now practised and contended for in the church of Rome; that the allowance of the former will by no means infer the latter: the forementioned great man has shewn the difference in several particulars, well worth every honest and prudent man's consideration, that desires to inform himself in this matter. And to him I shall the rather refer the inquisitive reader for them [b]; because I will here add two other differences, which may of themselves be sufficient to shew that M. de Meaux, who says we begin to acknowledge that the "invocation of saints was established in the fourth age," would be very much beholden to us, if we should make such an acknowledgment: for when the truth comes to be understood, it amounts to this, and no more; That there were but some beginnings and steps made towards this practice, at the latter end of the fourth age; and that these beginnings were not then established neither.

For first, the instances produced to shew that devout people were wont to recommend themselves to the prayers of the

[a] Answer to Jesuit's Challenge, p. 444. [b] Ibid. from p. 445. to p. 457.

martyrs, do generally shew that they did it at the respective memories of those martyrs, where the martyrs were believed to be within hearing; which, as I shall presently shew, makes a great difference in the case. In the mean time, I do not assert that it was universally believed that the souls of the martyrs were present at their memories; for St. Austin[c] himself durst not affirm it; and though he thought men fared the better for the prayers of the martyrs, yet whether they heard those who called to them at their memories, or wherever else they were thought to have appeared, he professed that it passed the strength of his understanding; and this, although he allowed greater privileges to the martyrs than to other saints. St. Austin could not digest an opinion, that St. Hierom indeed made no difficulty to admit, that a martyr could at the same time be in places very distant from one another. He that will consult St. Hierom[d] about his reason may find it in a little compass; and when he has done, he will be satisfied that I do not forbear the mentioning of it for any disadvantage it would bring to our cause. But that which I at present assert is this; That where we find the faithful desiring any relief by the prayers of the martyrs, (whether they prayed to the martyrs themselves or not,) we still find them at the proper memories of those martyrs. Thus St. Basil, just now quoted: "You that coming to *this place* have found him an helper to your prayer." Thus St. Hierom also represents Constantia at the tomb of Hilarion in the relation already mentioned. And thus St. Austin[e], in that famous chapter of miracles done by the memories of martyrs, where that relief which was supposed to be obtained by the twenty martyrs was asked at their memory, and not at St. Stephen's; as St. Stephen was supposed to help those that prayed at his memory. In like manner, St. Chrysostom, who brings in the emperor doing that honour to the apostles St. Peter and St. Paul, as to stand entreating their prayers; St. Chrysostom, I say, introduces him to their monuments or memories; where it was that this honour was done to them. And so in the oration upon Bernix, Prosdoce, and Domnina, we find this exhortation: "Let us not only upon this [anniversary] festival, but upon other days

[c] Aug. de Cura pro Mortuis, c. 16. [d] Hieron. adv. Vigilant. tom. 2. p. 158.
[e] De Civ. Dei, l. 22. c. 8.

also, stick close to them, and entreat them that we may obtain their patronage[f]." The same observation holds, if you go to the oration upon the Egyptian martyrs[g], and to that upon Ignatius; and indeed it holds so generally, that it should in reason interpret any place that mentions invocation of the martyrs, where it is not evidently expressed that it was done at their memories; I mean, as I said before, their respective memories[h]; unless some other place be distinctly mentioned, as in that place of St. Austin now referred to; where the presence of the martyr, out of his memory, was supposed to be witnessed by his appearing, or by his works. But this was very extraordinary. The usual way of soliciting the prayers of a martyr was to go to his memory.

The hardest passage of all to be accounted for by this rule is that of St. Ambrose[i]; where he tells the widows, that the angels are to be entreated as well as the martyrs: for though later times have found relics of angels, yet they had none then. The whole place is something obscure, yet I will try to give the best account of it that I can. His business was to persuade widows to continue unmarried; and he tells them, that by good works and devotion they would gain the assistance of the prayers of the apostles and martyrs, who would now help those that were not akin to them, as effectually as they helped their kindred by their prayers when they were upon earth. And then he has these words: "I would to God that there was somebody who could so readily pray for us! or indeed that very Peter who prayed for his wife's mother, and Andrew his brother; for then they were able to obtain for their kindred, now they can obtain for us and for all." I can make nothing of this, but that St. Ambrose was not sure St. Peter and St. Andrew were near enough to have their prayers desired, or to be spoken to; though the best way to engage their prayers, and to have them near us, was to abound in alms and devotion. But then he adds: "The angels are to be entreated, who are given to us to be our guardians: the martyrs are to be entreated, whose patronage we seem to challenge after a sort, by having the pledge of their bodies. They

[f] Chrys. tom. 5. Homil. 65.
[g] Id. tom. 5.
[h] Aug. de Cura, ubi supra.
[i] Ambros. de Viduis, tom. 4. col. 505. 506.

can pray against our sins, who have washed away their own sins, if they had any, by their own blood." So that the conclusion seems to be this: that although the best way of engaging all the apostles and martyrs was to abound in alms and prayers; yet it would be very good also for every one to entreat his guardian angel to pray for him, and to desire the same of those martyrs whose relics were a pledge of their nearness and presence. If this be not the meaning of St. Ambrose, (for I do not love to be confident about the meaning of a place that is not very clear,) I shall be glad to be better instructed. If it be, this is a further confirmation of what I have observed, that the calling upon martyrs in those days went by their relics and memories. And by the way, this single instance of advising to entreat the angels too, seems to proceed upon the common reason, viz. a supposition of the presence of those angels that God had given for our guard. And it was a current opinion amongst some of the Greek Fathers, (whom St. Ambrose studied and imitated very industriously,) that every good man had his angel; though I am not satisfied that any but St. Ambrose carried the opinion to this conclusion, that men should entreat their angels to pray for them.

So that notwithstanding the singularity of St. Ambrose, in advising to call upon angels, I see little reason why he should be thought to speak in this fashion, merely because he was in comparison but a novice in Christianity when he wrote this book. Towards the end of his life he seemed to be as fond as ever he had been of the relics of martyrs, and very desirous to make his prayers over them, if Paulinus[k] may be believed: who observed, that "if the holy priest went to pray in a place at which he had never been seen to pray before, this was a token that he knew by revelation the body of some martyr to lie hid thereabouts." So that although the bodies he then speaks of were soon translated into the church of the apostles, yet St. Ambrose would lose no time, but went forthwith to say his prayers to God, at the places where they lay buried, and probably enough to speak to them too: believing that they were there near enough to observe and hear him, and that they would assist him with their prayers.

[k] Paulinus in Vita Ambros. Paris. Amb.

Thus Sozomen tells us, that Theodosius going out of Constantinople, in his expedition against Eugenius, and coming to the seventh mile, there "prayed to God[l]," and likewise "called to John the Baptist to help him[m]." I shall not need to insist upon the difference of expression, *praying* to God, and *calling* to the saint, though several instances might be produced in favour of such an observation. For here also we find, that the place where the emperor *prayed* to God[n], and withal *called* upon the Baptist, was no other than that church which he had built for a memory of St. John Baptist. For it seems certain monks of the Macedonian heresy were said to have found the head of the Baptist at Hierusalem; which, after several removes, was at last brought by Theodosius to Constantinople, in the suburbs whereof he buried it, and erected a stately church over it: so that here the relics of the martyr were a pledge of his presence and patronage; and here it was that Theodosius did not only pray to God, but called to the saint for his assistance too. Ruffinus indeed tells us[o], that he sought help by the intercession of other saints; but where was it? Not here at St. John Baptist's memory; but where the relics of the apostles and martyrs were kept, that is, in other memories. But when the emperor was come into Italy, and had the enemy before him in the field; though we find that he prayed, yet there is not the least intimation of calling upon the Baptist, or upon any other saint there. It is only said, that "prostrating himself upon the ground, he prayed with tears, and God presently heard his prayers[p]." But though the victory was, without all question, to be ascribed to God; yet Sozomen relates a strange story, which he had taken, as it seems, upon common report, how the Devil ascribed it to John the Baptist. For the same day that the battle was fought, a man possessed being in the church of St. John Baptist, was heaved up very high from the ground, and the Devil that was in him "railed at the Baptist, and reproached him for having lost his head[q];" but yet could not forbear confessing to him in this manner: "Thou overcomest me, and defeatest my army." I confess I am apt to suspect foul play

[l] προσεύξασθαι τῷ Θεῷ.
[m] ἐπικαλέσασθαι. Sozom. lib. 7. c. 24.
[n] Ibid. c. 21.
[o] Ruffin. Hist. lib. 2. c. 33.
[p] Sozom. lib. 7. c. 24.
[q] Ibid. l. 7. c. 24.

in this prank of the Devil, if it were true; and do believe, that God ought to have had the glory not a wit the less for the Devil's giving it to the saint. But such kind of reports were made use of to confirm people in an opinion of the presence of the martyrs at their memories, (for the Devil's speaking to John the Baptist here was his acknowledgment of it,) and in the practice of making addresses to them there upon that account.

Nothing yet appears to the contrary, but that they who thought the martyrs heard when they were spoken to, believed their presence to be limited to some certain places, in the compass of which they were within hearing. But I am not so vain as to undertake that there were none in those days who called upon the martyrs in all places indifferently: for while the great men of that age seemed to give a full scope to that strain of zeal towards the martyrs which was now going forward; it is to be feared rather, (though no such thing appears,) that some of the people made no difference between calling upon their martyrs at their memories or any where else. And so it certainly was, when one of those [r] sermons was written that are falsely attributed to St. Ambrose.

But it is enough for my present purpose, that the custom of calling upon the martyrs at their respective memories was as yet very notorious. And this indeed was the ground of that scoff of Vigilantius, for which St. Hierom chastises him so severely: "What," says he[s], "are the souls of the martyrs therefore so fond of their own ashes? Do they hover about them, and are always present with them, lest perhaps if any one comes to pray, they should be absent, and incapable of hearing him?" To the matter of which question St. Hierom was almost silent; but he lashes him for abusing and laughing at the relics of the martyrs. The truth is, Vigilantius had hit that popular opinion, that the martyrs were very much present with their relics, and consequently, that the best way to be sure of them was to go to the churches where their relics were, unless (which happened very seldom) they should discover a particular affection to some other place, as St. Hilarion did to the garden of Cyprus, after his relics were stolen out of it.

[r] Serm. de Fest. Nazarii et Cels. tom. 4. [s] Hierom. adv. Vigil. ubi supra.

Now therefore, as the first addresses that were made to the martyrs had not the nature of prayer or religious invocation in any other respect, so neither in this, that they ascribed omnipresence to the saints or martyrs. For not only the belief of that age, but the practice of it too, in seeking the intercession of the saints, limited their presence to some determinate places, and generally to their respective memories. They that called upon the saints at all, did not indifferently call upon them in any place, but (if we may gather the general practice from such particular instances as we have) they invocated them in some certain place only, where they were thought to be within hearing. Nor can I find that they thought it reasonable to speak so much as to one saint at the memory of another; but rather to every saint at his own.

Which makes the addresses of those times to the martyrs very different from the invocation of saints in the church of Rome; which hath let her children loose to call upon every saint in every place, as occasion requires; and has furnished them with litanies of supplication to all the saints, to be used in all places of the world.

He that cannot see a wide difference between these two things can see nothing. The first practice of all, setting aside the ill consequences of it, was (to say the worst of it) but a harmless superstition; that is, when as yet the relics of the martyrs were entire, and there was but one memory to one. The next step indeed was something dangerous, which began also in this age, and that was, allowing some of them several memories in distant places; at every one of which, I believe, they were spoken to by some or other; though it was yet pretty well that they confined them all within some bounds. But the last practice is an intolerable affront to the Divine majesty, because it does in effect ascribe omnipresence to a creature. The progress of the mischief from so small a beginning to so strange a conclusion, was plainly this: By dispersing the relics of the same martyrs into two or more, and at length into many places, their memories were by degrees strangely multiplied; and that, to speak the truth, not inconsiderably in the next age, as appears by Theodoret[t]; and so by degrees they were allowed a greater, and by the help of new relics, (when

[t] Theod. de Cur. Græc. Aff. l. 8. de Mart.

the old ones would bear dividing no longer,) still a greater compass of presence; till at last superstition and worldly policy together would not allow any bounds at all to be set to their presence, but would have them called upon no less than God in all places whatsoever.

This account of the latter practices of the fourth age in this matter, and of the grounds of their practice, may perhaps deserve to be added to a great many others, whereby the difference of the addresses to the martyrs in that age from the Roman invocation of saints has been shewn. I shall say no more of it, than that it may appear fair and reasonable to any man that shall take the pains to compare one thing with another. At least it deserves some consideration; because if the addresses that were made in that age to the martyrs were limited to some certain places, it will destroy an appeal to that age for an invocation which is unlimited, and ascribes omnipresence to the saints. And therefore, if in assigning this difference I have proceeded upon a mistake of the practice of that age, the gentlemen of the church of Rome are concerned to shew it: and when they do, it will be my part to shew that I am not fond of a notion, but can with more ease reject it when it appears to be false, than I entertained it while it seemed to be true.

But then, 2, as the addresses of the fourth age to the saints were not properly religious invocations, so neither were they established in the church. There was no public rule or order for them, but they were wholly the effects of a private and voluntary zeal, encouraged by some of the guides of the church, and perhaps connived at by all. They were, I say, the actions of so many single Christians in behalf of themselves or their near relations, but no part of the established service of the church. The Liturgies were every where still the same, and none but God was called upon in the service performed at the religious assemblies of the church. If the pretended catholics could shew a change in the service of the church about this time, favouring the invocation of saints, that indeed were something. But then they must not refer us to the shameful interpolations of St. Chrysostom's and other ancient Liturgies. It were an easy matter to be very large upon this head; but, for a reason I shall mention presently, we will for

the present go no further than to St. Austin; for if his authority be of any weight with them, they will see that, whatever was done in the way of private worship by single persons, there was no change of the service of the church in this respect, but that God only was invocated in the stated assemblies of the faithful. Let us therefore hear what St. Austin says; "The Gentiles," saith he [u], "have built temples, raised altars, and ordained priests, and offered sacrifices to their gods. But we do not erect temples to our martyrs, as if they were gods, but memories, as to dead men, whose spirits live with God. Nor do we erect altars upon which to sacrifice to martyrs, but to one God only do we offer, the God of martyrs and our God; at which sacrifice, as men of God, who in confessing him have overcome the world, they are named in their place and order; but they are not invocated by the priest who sacrifices."

St. Austin plainly speaks of the public service of the church at the assemblies of the faithful; in which, if we will take his word, no addresses were made but to God only. And he expressly says that the priest who administered the service did not invocate the martyrs, but named them in order, as men that had overcome the world; that is, gave thanks and praises to God for them. And here I am much mistaken, or else there is an observable difference intimated between the voluntary addresses of single persons to the martyrs at their memories, and between the mention that was made of the martyrs when the faithful assembled for the ordinary service of God at the same memories; for when in voluntary and private devotion the saints were spoken to, it was still at their respective memories; but in the assemblies of the church for Divine service they were indifferently mentioned in their place and order at all the memories of the martyrs, but not invocated. But that which I chiefly observe is this; that neither was the martyr, whose memory was the place of God's public service, invocated in the prayers of the church; so that even the addresses of that age to a martyr at his own memory were not established by the order and service of the church, but left to the voluntary zeal of single persons.

And therefore those passages of this Father referred to by

[u] De Civit. Dei, lib. 22. c. 10.

M. de Meaux make nothing for invocation of saints. St. Austin, it seems, (though it was a singular opinion of his,) thought "it an injury to a martyr to pray for him, by whose prayers we ourselves are to be commended[x];" and therefore the martyrs were not mentioned in that place of the service where "other dead persons were commemorated," viz. those for whom prayer was made. And, says he, "at the holy table we do not so commemorate them as we do others that rest in peace," viz. as those "for whom we pray; but rather as those that pray for us, that we may tread in their steps[y]." Now though St. Austin was one of those that doubted whether the petition of the faithful arrived to the knowledge of the martyrs, yet he doubted not that the martyrs prayed for the faithful, which is all that can be proved from these places. But what is this to the invocation of them? which St. Austin also expressly denies, in saying, "that they are not invocated by the priest who sacrifices."

And here we must remember what the ancient Fathers meant by the *Christian sacrifice;* not only the oblation of bread and wine brought by all the people, and presented at the holy table with the prayers of the priest, nor only the consecration of those elements afterwards, to be the memorials of Christ's body and blood, which they first laid before God, and then distributed to the faithful; I say, we must remember that they did not only mean these visible sacrifices, but likewise all the prayers, praises, and thanksgivings of the church, which were vocal sacrifices, together with *contrition of heart,* and all *pious affections* answerable to the outward sacrifices, by which the faithful offered up themselves a sacrifice to God[z]. This was *that reasonable service*, and *unbloody sacrifice,* which the priest, in behalf of all the people, solemnly offered up to God. So that St. Austin's meaning is this: That the faithful being assembled at the memories of the martyrs for Divine service, the martyrs are not invocated by the priest in any part of the administration: and therefore the distinction of sacrificial and extrasacrificial prayers will not avoid this testimony, since the prayers of the faithful at their religious

[x] De verb. Apost. Serm. 17. [y] Tractat. in Joh. 84. [z] Aug. de Civ. lib. 10. c. 6.

assemblies were all sacrificial prayers, as being part of the Christian sacrifice.

And St. Austin, whose testimony this is, did in this notion of sacrifice clearly follow the doctrine of the more ancient Fathers: "Let us observe," saith he[a], "that where God said he would not have sacrifice, there it is shewn that he will have sacrifice. He willeth not the sacrifice of a slain beast, but he will have the sacrifice of a contrite heart." And afterwards he addeth these instances, as the ancients had done before him: the Psalmist saith, *Offer unto God the sacrifice of praise, and pay thy vows to the Most High, and call upon me in the day of tribulation, and I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.*

It is true, that he sometimes distinguisheth the visible oblations of the church from prayers and praises; as where he argues, that the [b] *visible sacrifices* are to be offered up to God only, whose visible sacrifice we ourselves are in our hearts; as in vocal prayer and praise we pray to God, and praise him only, to whom we offer the devotion of the heart. But though in that place he doth not call prayers and praises sacrifices, as he doth elsewhere very frequently; yet even there he taketh it for granted, that when the faithful were assembled for praying to God and praising him, they addressed themselves to none but to him.

It is so plain, even from this Father, that the invocation of martyrs and saints was no part of the service of the church, that I have thought fit to insist only upon his testimony, especially since M. de Meaux has been pleased to bring in the words of the council of Trent, explaining their practice in invocating the saints; "because," saith he, "the council doth almost make use of the very words of this holy bishop." Let us first hear the words of the council: "The church does not offer sacrifices to the saints, but to God alone, who has crowned them: the priest also does not address himself to St. Peter and St. Paul, saying, I offer up to you this sacrifice; but rendering thanks to God for their victories, he demands THEIR ASSISTANCE, to the end that those, whose memory we celebrate upon earth, would vouchsafe to pray for us in heaven." Now let us hear the words of St. Austin, in that

[a] Aug. de Civitat. lib. 10. c. 5. [b] Ibid. c. 19.

place to which M. de Meaux refers: "But we do not appoint temples, priesthoods, holy rites, and sacrifices to the martyrs, because not they, but their God is our God. Indeed we honour the memories of martyrs, as of holy men, &c. But who of the faithful ever heard the priest, standing at the altar, though erected for the honour and worship of God, over the holy body of a martyr [c], to say in the prayers, I offer sacrifice to thee, O Peter, or Paul, or Cyprian; when at their memories it is offered to God, who made them both men and martyrs, and associated them to the angels in heavenly glory; that by this solemnity we may give thanks to the true God for their victories, and that we, by renewing in ourselves the remembrance of them, may be excited, by imitating them, to strive for such crowns and palms as they have obtained [d], THE SAME TRUE GOD BEING INVOCATED FOR OUR ASSISTANCE. It seems there is almost no difference made by putting the saints instead of God. Let M. de Meaux lay his hand upon his heart, and tell us honestly for once, whether *eodem invocato in auxilium* do not refer to the true God spoken of before, and not to the saints? and if so, what is there in this passage of the holy bishop that makes for the invocation of saints?

And now M. de Meaux may go on as long as he thinks fit to make triumphs upon our "acknowledgement, that during the fourth century the church desired the prayers of martyrs and honoured relics [e]." For he goes on in this strain in his late Pastoral Letter, where he declaims so tragically against those that (if you will believe him) charge idolatry upon the "illustrious fourth age; yea, that very age wherein the prophecies of the kingdom of Jesus Christ were accomplished more manifestly than ever; when the kings of the earth, till then persecutors of the name of Jesus, became, according to the ancient oracles, his adorers." My lord the bishop of Meaux knew when it was convenient to use the style of a perfect gentleman. But since he wrote his exposition [f], the case of some of his countrymen is something altered, though the cause be the same. Now the blasphemies of the protestants put him into fits of amazement, and he cannot tell "what horror

[c] Aug. de Civitat. lib. 8. c. 27. [d] "Eodem invocato in auxilium." [e] Pastoral Letter, p. 29. [f] Page 30.

they are worthy of g." But to do him right, he keeps true to one old principle, that will, I believe, be dear to him as long as he lives: "Once more, my brethren, let us not dispute, let us not run into controversy h." No, by no means; for it is much easier to declaim than to dispute; to take things for granted than to prove them; and to make general flourishes, than to enter into examination of particulars. What can be more easy than to exclaim in this manner, "The Ambroses, the Augustins, the Hieroms, the Gregories of Nazianzen, the Basiliuses, and the Chrysostomes, whom all Christians have respected, even till now, as the doctors of truth?" But hold a little; if great names will do the business, let us see what we can do in this kind: "Can you endure, my brethren, those who have forsaken the Irenæuses, the Justin Martyrs, the Clemenses of Alexandria, the Tertullians, the Origens, the Cyprians, the Athanasiuses, whom all Christians do pretend even now to respect as doctors of truth? Those, my brethren, that were more ancient than the Ambroses, &c. and most of whom laid down their lives in a glorious martyrdom, which none of the other did. It is true, brethren, i that some part of the prophecies was fulfilled when the empire took the church into its protection; but we do not find it was foretold also that the Christians of that age would be wiser or better than their forefathers. Does not M. de Meaux tell us, 'that Antichrist must come according to the predictions of the apostles.' But when that happens, the times are not to be much the better for it. It was the admirable goodness of God to crown the church at last with peace and glory. But do not think the authority of that age is to be regarded the more, because it was illustrious for the wealth and splendour of this world, lest by the same reason you should undervalue the authority of the more ancient ages, which were illustrious for nothing but truth and godliness and martyrdom; which if you will do, my brethren, might we not well cry out, *O prodigy, unheard of amongst Christians!* that we should begin to think it a better mark of a pure church, to have it in her power to persecute others, than to endure persecution herself after the example of Christ and his apostles."

g Pastoral Letter, p. 29. h Page 16. i Page 30. k Page 29. l Page 2.

It is an easy matter to requite a declamation. But would not the bishop of Meaux say to this, that the Irenæuses, &c. do not condemn what is now practised in the church of Rome? So do we say, that we are far from charging the Ambroses, &c. with idolatry; and that the doctrines and practices of that age, with respect to the points that we are upon, are so vastly different from what we now see in the church of Rome, that if the church of Rome be idolatrous, it does by no means follow that the fourth age was so. So that we must come to disputing at last, whether we will or not, if we talk of these questions to any purpose.

I have shewn the first steps that were made towards the invocation of saints, which, I confess, is an innovation maintained by the church of Rome that of all the rest bids the fairest for antiquity; because there was a certain address to martyrs used by many Christians, and commended by some of the Fathers towards the latter end of the fourth age, which looks something like it, till you come near to examine the matter throughly. But then you may discern so considerable a difference, that it is a vain thing to pretend that the invocation of saints, as now practised in the church of Rome, was as ancient as the conclusion of the fourth age. And what we need to grant is this; That those beginnings are so ancient which first did give occasion to it, and which, with the help of ignorance and superstition, did at length bring it into the church.

SECT. XI.

Hitherto the honour done to the martyrs was that of founding churches upon their relics, and frequenting them both for the public service of God and for private devotions; in which the martyrs themselves were sometimes called upon, as if they were present at their memories. But this was done before their images came to be set up in the church so much as for ornament, and long before they were thought of for worship. We have already noted the act of Epiphanius, in tearing the picture of Christ, or some saint, (for he knew not well what it was,) which he found upon a veil; an act of indignation, so much the more remarkable, because the church where it was done was in the diocese of John bishop of

Hierusalem; to whom therefore Epiphanius [m] thought fit to give an account of it in that epistle which is to be seen in St. Hierom's works; and the reason he gives for what he did is as remarkable as the action was: "When I saw this in a church of Christ, that the picture of a man should be hanged up there, against the authority of the scriptures, I tare it," &c. And again: "I entreat thee to command the presbyters of that place to provide, for the future, that such veils, being contrary to what our religion allows, may not be hanged up in the church of Christ."

But as for the images of martyrs and saints, why should I go about to prove that they were not yet brought into churches, when the pretended catholics are fain to give reasons why they were hardly to be met with amongst Christians even out of churches. Petavius excuseth the matter thus: "The images of Christ and the saints were not used, lest they should be taken by the rude and unskilful people for idols, to which they had been accustomed." And afterward; "Images are not evil of themselves, nor forbidden by any law of God; nevertheless, that no shadow of superstition and idolatry might give offence to the tender, and, as I may say, the unsettled minds of Christians, and that the Gentiles might not object to those of our religion who abhorred idols and dissuaded men from them, that themselves also had certain images of their own; it is likely they were but sparingly used for about the first four ages; all which time the abominable worship of devils in idols, together with a most cruel vexation of the Christian name, went on. At length the fifth age being come, after that the church had gained her freedom, and began boldly to stretch forth her arms, images began to appear in most places, and were shewn in temples and oratories; whereas hitherto, though they had been in some use, yet they were not to be seen so promiscuously and frequently [n]." In good time! But if such a man as Petavius could have shewn any use of images all this while, that any art could draw to his purpose, he had not served the cause with this miserable account of the late setting up of images. With the like to which Salmeron satisfied himself,

[m] Hieron. tom. 2. Ep. 60. v. fin.

[n] Petav. Dogm. Theol. tom. 4. part. 2. c. 13. p. 582, 583.

as to the silence of the scriptures about the worship of saints, as we have already seen. Now to make this appear likely, he insists upon it that the ancients disputed against the temples and altars of the heathens; though when peace and liberty was given to the church, the Christians had magnificent churches and altars of their own. But nothing can be more vain; for from the first the church had its altars or holy tables, and its holy places too, such as the times would permit. And therefore this instance doth not reach to the case of images, which they had not. But where the state of the controversy lay between the Christians and the heathens about temples and altars, and what was the difference between the one and the other, is too long to insert here; and therefore I refer the reader to Mr. Mede's discourse concerning churches, par. 1, book 2, where it is handled with exquisite diligence.

But if Petavius his reason hath any probability, why were not images brought in presently upon Constantine's coming to the empire, at least after the death of Julian? for then the church enjoyed peace and power; unless it were to be said, that by stepping boldly into that practice (as soon as they had gained power) which they had utterly condemned in their distress, they knew that they should bring the reproach of insincerity upon their profession, and that therefore it was more advisable to step into it by degrees. But he that can believe this of the ancient church must not pretend any great reverence for it.

But whereas Petavius thought this to be the likely reason why we hear not of images so long together, viz. that it would furnish the heathens with objections; I shall not fear to oppose this conjecture with another, and to say, that it is more likely and credible, that if the ancient Fathers had thought it lawful to bow down to images and to worship them, they would have brought this practice in with one consent; and that because the Gentiles had been accustomed to the worshipping of images: for it is incomparably more easy to bring men from worshipping some images to worship others, (as the Jesuits know by experience,) than from worshipping images to worship none at all. Nay, it is yet more likely that images were brought into several churches in the fifth age, in compliance with the inclinations of many of the Gentiles; who, now the church shined with the glory of the world, thronged

into it before they had worn off their superstition and fondness of images; and that the reason why it was done no sooner was this; That the zeal of the ancient church against images being yet fresh in the minds of men, must needs hinder their coming into any use immediately, and leave it to be a work of some time. And it is not unlikely that Petavius himself was well aware of these things, for otherwise he was not likely to confess, that in "this controversy about images, we are not to have regard to the examples and orders of the more ancient church, but rather of latter times;" which is in more civil terms to confess it was an innovation; for surely this learned Jesuit knew better than to say, that in a controversy about the antiquity of worshipping images we ought "rather to regard later times than the ancient church."

But they that will find church authority for image-worship must go down yet lower, even beyond the fifth, sixth, and seventh ages of the church. Pictures were in the fifth age brought into divers churches for ornament and instruction. The histories of the Old and New Testament, and at length the passions of martyrs and stories of saints, were to be seen upon the walls of churches. Indeed when the seventh age was now coming in, we find the people of Marseilles began to worship images; which Serenus[o] their bishop discerning, broke them down. Which breaking of them Gregory the Great disallowed, because he thought images were instead of books to them that could not read; but the worshipping of them he disallowed as much as Serenus. It is likely enough that some unwarrantable regard to images began about the same time to obtain in other places; for in the seventh age there were warm controversies about it, which grew to such a heat in the reign of Leo Isaurus, that he commanded the images to be broken down. But superstition had gotten such an head, that this would not do; but his son Constantine was forced to call together a council which (consisted of 338 bishops) to put an end to those troubles, if it might be done. And they did their parts effectually; for they did not only decree against the worshipping of images, but the retaining of them. Now thirty years after this, towards the end of the eighth age, another council was assembled at Nice, by the promotion of the

[o] Greg. lib. 9. Ep. 9. ad Serenum.

empress Irene; in which image-worship was stoutly maintained, but with such kind of arguments, that if I were for the worship of images, I should be very well content to lose the advantage of the council's authority, provided I might never be reproached with their reasoning. The cause was upheld by Adrian I, then bishop of Rome, who sent the acts of this second Nicene council to Charles the Great. Charles calls a council of Italian, German, and French bishops at Frankford, in which it was determined against the Constantinopolitan council, that images might be retained; and smartly concluded against these Nicene fathers, that without impiety they could *not be worshipped.* It was unlucky that the late beginning of antiquity for the worship of images should be discredited by such an authority, and robbed of all pretence to universality. And therefore Petavius, as others had done, comforts himself with that vain pretence, that the council of Frankford[p] understood not the sense of the Nicene bishops. It is a vain pretence, because the acts of the Nicene council lay before the fathers of Frankford. But the Nicene doctrine was condemned about thirty-two years after this at Paris, and was indeed generally opposed in the western churches. So that it seems there is some reason why image-worshippers should not regard the examples and constitutions of the ancient, but rather of the latter times of the church.

But when began the worship of the blessed Virgin? and why have we forgotten her all this while? Even because the Fathers forgot her first. It is true, we find in Gregory[q] Nazianzen's oration upon St. Cyprian the story of Justina the virgin calling upon the Virgin Mary to defend her against the unchaste designs of Cyprian; who, if we may believe the tale, was once a conjurer at Antioch, &c. But by St. Cyprian's life, written by Pontius his deacon, it is evident that this story is void of all circumstance of truth. Baronius[r] himself confesses as much; and by the endeavours that have been used to mend the tale for the credit of Gregory Nazianzen, it is plain that there is no remedy, but it must go for an inexcusable business: and therefore, if ever there was cause from the matter

[p] Petav. Dog. Th. tom. 5 par. 2. lib. 15.

[q] Greg. Naz. Orat. 18. tom. 1.

[r] Bar. A. D. 250. N. 5. See Daille de Object. Cultus, p. 51, &c.

of a writing imputed to a man of great name and authority, to conclude it is none of his, this equity is to be shewn to Gregory Nazianzen; it being incredible that a man of his worth and abilities should either invent such a lie, or be made to believe it. I confess it is hard on the one hand to believe that this story should be so dexterously shuffled into Nazianzen's oration, that the impostor was never discovered; yet, on the other hand, it is hard to believe that such a man as he should lend his belief and his breath to so absurd a fable.

[s]Epiphanius also tells us of some Arabian women that worshipped the Virgin Mary, by laying a cake before her for some days, and offering it up to her, and then eating it amongst themselves. But that which he says upon this occasion is by no means for the comfort of her worshippers. "Let us," saith he, "put on the spirits of men, and beat down the madness of these women." I know it will be said, that this reproof of those that sacrificed to the blessed Virgin reaches not those that do not sacrifice to her, but worship her without sacrifice. But I am sure Epiphanius makes no such distinction. "For," says he, "who of the prophets ever allowed that a man should be worshipped, much less a woman?" If it was the doctrine of those times that the blessed Virgin was more glorious than the cherubim and seraphim, Epiphanius did strangely forget himself, and the person he was speaking of, when he supposed a man might rather be made an object of religious worship than a woman, though the blessed Virgin.

For thus he goes on: "Though the Virgin be a chosen vessel, she is yet but a woman.—The old error shall not reign amongst us, to leave the living God, and to worship things that he has made: for if he will not suffer the angels to be adored, how much less the daughter of Joachim and Anne, who was born to them as other mortals are born, &c., of a father and a mother!" If the Virgin had then been invocated with prayers and hymns, is it to be thought that [t]Epiphanius, who in the foregoing discourse raised the honour of the Virgin as high as truth would suffer him, would not have said it there, or distinguished it from sacrifice here? He says indeed, "Let Mary be honoured, but let the Father, Son, and Holy

[s] Epiph. Hæres. 79. lib. 3. tom. 2. adv. Collyrid. [t] Hær. 78. adv. Antidicom.

Ghost be adored." But if it had been then as it is now, Epiphanius could not have avoided saying, "Let Mary be worshipped with religious invocation indeed, but let God only be worshipped with sacrifice." But does he intimate any thing of this nature? Nay, he does as plainly exclude all religious worship of her, as it was possible to exclude a thing which had not then obtained in the church. "For," says he, "God did not commit the power of baptizing to Mary, or of blessing his disciples, or any authority upon earth. This only he vouchsafed to her, to be a sanctified creature, and worthy to enter into his kingdom." But if she had been then adored in any sort, and Epiphanius had approved it, he was strangely forgetful of the duty of a good writer, not to mention it in this place at least, where the plain rules of discourse obliged him, and would have led him to it. All which makes it evident, that we are to take worship or adoration here in the proper sense of the word, and not for visible sacrifices only. And the whole place is the more unlucky to the worshippers of the blessed Virgin, because no comfort is to be had from that expression of honouring her [u], which Epiphanius requires we should do. For that by this he did not mean any religious worship, is, I think, reasonably plain, from what he says concerning Eve in this very discourse: "Let our mother Eve[x] be honoured, as being formed by God." I do not know that prayers are said to Eve in the Roman church; but I am confident Epiphanius was a stranger to any such thing in his time. So that if we examine these words of *worshipping* and *honouring*, as they stand in Epiphanius, never so long, they will confess this and no more, that we must think and speak very honourably of Mary, as being a most holy woman, and the virgin mother of Jesus; but that we must at no hand adore her with any sort of invocation or religious rites whatsoever. And so I shall conclude this plain business with the words of Epiphanius: "Although Mary be excellently good and holy, and to be honoured, she is not yet to be honoured so as to be worshipped." By which we may judge of the modesty or understanding of him, whoever he was, that clapped the name of St. Epiphanius to that fulsome [y]

[u] Τιμὴ ἔστω Μαρίᾳ.
[x] Τιμάσθω.
[y] De Laudib. Virg. Mar. tom. 2. Epiph.

oration concerning the blessed Virgin, where the angels, cherubim, and seraphim, are brought in adoring her, &c.

As for what we have concerning the blessed Virgin in the Liturgy, said to be St. Chrysostom's, and pretended to be translated by Erasmus, it is all manifest interpolation, being directly contrary to St. Chrysostom's doctrine in his undoubted writings. Could he that affirms, that if Christ were not by nature [z] the Son of God, he had been inferior to the angels, affirm also that the blessed Virgin (who is naturally no goddess) is "incomparably more glorious than the cherubim and seraphim?" Or that she was unspotted, whom he plainly notes for [a]ambition and desire of worldly glory, and supposes to be checked by Jesus for it? Concerning the blessed Virgin, and the privilege she had by being the mother of Jesus, they spake in those days as we of the reformation now do. St. Chrysostom be witness for this in the place last cited: "When thou hearest that woman saying, *Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps that gave thee suck;* and then himself answering, *Yea, rather blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it;* do not think that these words argued contempt of his mother, but that he would shew how little it would profit her that she was his mother, if she were not exceedingly good and faithful. But if it profited Mary nothing at all, that Christ was born of her, unless she had the virtue of the soul, much less good will it do us to have an excellent father, brother, or child, whilst we have none of their virtue. For we are to place our hope of salvation in nothing, next to the grace of God, but only in our proper good actions and qualities. For if that relation which Mary had to Christ were a thing of itself profitable, the Jews had found it so in some degree; for Christ was akin to them after the flesh; and so had the city in which he was born, and so had his brethren. But whilst his brethren did just what pleased themselves, the honour they had to be of kin to him profited them not at all; but they were condemned with the rest of the world." A great deal more to this purpose you may find in this excellent Father, and that in the place by me cited; by which you may see what the strain of that age was, as to the blessed Virgin, and

[z] Εἰ δὲ χάριτί ἐστιν υἱὸς, οὐ μόνον οὐ ἀγγέλων. Chrys. in Hebr. c. 1. Hom. 2. διαφορώτερος, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐλάττων ἐστιν

[a] Id. in Joan. c. 2. Hom. 20.

how very unlike to that which was taken up in following times; some instances of which we have in homilies falsely attributed to St. Chrysostom[b].

In short, if we set aside spurious writings, such as the sermon concerning the Assumption of the blessed Virgin, published in St. Hierom's works, and attributed by some to Sophronius, but was most certainly written long after they were both dead; and the two prayers (attributed to St. Ambrose[c]) preparatory to mass; in the second of which God is desired (according to the genius of after-times) to inspire the blessed Virgin first, and then the Apostles, and then the martyrs and confessors, with the thought of praying to God for the priest; but the best learned amongst the papists have been ashamed to produce these prayers as St. Ambrose's, they are so evidently suppositious. If we set aside also the book of Meditations, which the Latin rhymes that are in it convince of novelty; and the treatise of the Assumption, attributed to St. Austin, and the sermons under his name, upon the feast of the Annunciation, which could be none of his, because that feast was not then in being; and in one word, all those writings which learned men of the Roman communion have themselves confessed to be at least doubtful, though they had for some time gone under the names of Fathers of the fourth age: setting these aside, I say, we find but moderate things spoken of the blessed Virgin.

After all the pains that have been taken to make some of her festivals ancient, it is more than probable that as yet she had none; and that the Fathers of the fourth age, who are cited for one or two of them, have been, without their consent, made to speak the sense of after-ages, that were loath to be destitute of all pretence from antiquity, for making the honour of the blessed Virgin outshine all that was done to other martyrs and saints. For the Constitutions[d] do not so much as mention one of her festivals, where, one would think, they should have omitted none.

The salutation of Ave Maria has now, for some time, run through the religion of the church of Rome in public and pri-

[b] De uno Legislatore. In Samaritanam, &c. tom. 6.

[c] Tom. 4.

[d] Constit. Apost. l. 8. c. 33.

vate devotions; but in this age no example or recommendation of any such thing is to be met withal.

No, nor one prayer to her do we yet hear of; which plainly shews, that (whatever the superstition of some one private person or other might be, of which we cannot affirm or deny any thing) her worship was no part of the religion of the age. If you would know the first bold man, after the Collyridians, that brought her into the church to be invocated, Nicephorus will tell you it was one Peter Fullo[e], a bishop indeed, but an Eutychian, who found out four very profitable things, if you will believe Nicephorus; one whereof was, "that the holy name of the Virgin should be called upon in every prayer." How the invention of this man was entertained, I cannot say: he lived near the sixth age. But neither is thus much antiquity to be boasted of, nor was it for the credit of the innovation to have an heretic for its author.

The church was full of the memories of the martyrs; but as yet the blessed Virgin had none. What a strange thing was it that Theodoret, who ran the honour of the martyrs to that height, that it requires some candour to bring him down with safety and honour; that he, I say, should make no mention at all of the blessed Virgin, and the solemnities that were due to her; and that in a discourse where he professedly brings in the martyrs, supplanting those demons which had been so long served by the pagan world, he could name[f] Peter, Paul, Thomas, Sergius, Marcellus, Leontius, Antoninus, and Mauritius. Do we think the blessed Virgin had been left to be understood amongst the other saints that had their solemnities also, if she had had, even in Theodoret's time, any at all? But why should we talk of her memories, when as yet her relics were not found, nor in all likelihood sought for? since if they had, it is not to be doubted but those monks, or others like them, that went up and down with the bones of martyrs, if indeed they were martyrs' bones, would have gratified the curiosity of devout people with some of those relics that posterity a long time after was blessed with, viz. some of the blessed Virgin's hair, her combs, her hood, her slipper, her espousal ring, nay, and some of her milk too, with such other things which came

[e] Niceph. Hist. l. 15. c. 28.

[f] Theod. de Curandis Græc. affect. De Martyr. ad fin.

not to light till some ages after the zeal of relics began in the church.

But when once devotion began to turn towards her, no time was lost; and though it was late first, yet her service presently overtook, and at last went beyond the honour that was done to the other saints and martyrs. The thirteenth age produced a relic of the blessed Virgin, so famous for the miracle that brought it into Europe, and for the miracles that have been done by it ever since, that the relics of the other saints are nothing to it; and that is, her house, once at Nazareth, where she was born, and visited by the angel; which house was carried by angels out of Palestine into Dalmatia, and from thence into Italy, where it now stands, and is our Lady of Loretto's chapel. By the fourteenth century she had gained no less than seven festivals in the year; which I mention, to shew the growing devotion of the Roman church towards the blessed Virgin; not that we make this any great matter of complaint; no, though they were twice seven, if the facts upon which they were grounded were true, and the ground reasonable, and God only were worshipped in the celebration of such festivals.

The later doctors have made too much amends for the modesty of the ancient Fathers, who spake indeed of her very honourably, but within bounds. The world was something altered in the middle of the seventh age, if pope Martin said what we find in Anastasius [g]: "Whoever does not honour and adore the blessed Virgin, the Mother of God, let him be accursed." Of which curse Germanus [h], the patriarch of Constantinople, was in no danger, if he addressed himself in this manner to the blessed Virgin: "Nobody is replenished with the knowledge of God but by thee, O most Holy. Nobody is saved but by thee, O Mother of God. Nobody is delivered from danger but by thee, O thou beloved of God." Again: "Thou having the power of a mother with God, dost beyond measure gain pardon for them who sin beyond measure. For it cannot be that thou shouldest not be heard, because to all purposes, and in all things, and through all things, God obeys thee as his true and immaculate Mother." This was pretty well for the eighth age; as likewise was that of Damascene,

[g] Collectan. Anast. p. 73. [h] German. in Biblioth. P. tom. 12. p. 704.

who calls the blessed Virgin, the Lady and Governess of all creatures[i]." No wonder therefore that cardinal Peter Damian, coming long after these, telleth her, that she "comes before the altar of reconciliation, not asking only, but commanding; as a lady, not as a servant." I know not whether he was the author of those glorious titles which have since furnished some of the hymns that we meet with in the Offices of the blessed Virgin: "The Queen of the World—the Window of Heaven—the Gate of Paradise—the Tabernacle of God—the Star of the Sea—the Heavenly Ladder, by which the heavenly King came down to us below, and by which man, who grovelled upon the ground, ascends in exaltation to heaven[k]." But Anselm, that lived in the same age with him, speaks more fully: "As God is the Father and God of all things, by his power creating all things; so blessed Mary, the Mother of God, restoring all things by her merits, is the Mother and Lady of the universe[l]." Which agrees very well with that reason he had given before, why her Son went to heaven before her: "[m] Perhaps, O Lord, lest thy court in heaven should stand in doubt whom it should rather go out to meet, thee their Lord coming to take possession of thy kingdom, or her their Lady ascending to that kingdom also, which belonged to her by a mother's right[n]." To this nothing could be added in so little a time beyond Bonaventure's Psalter, who taking the Psalms of David, put in *Lady* instead of *Lord* in this manner: "O come, let us sing unto our Lady, &c. Let every thing that hath breath praise our Lady." But not content with this, he framed the [o]Athanasian Creed to her service too, beginning thus: "Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he should hold a firm faith concerning the Virgin Mary; which faith except a man keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly." And now, whosoever shall consider the Litanies of the blessed Virgin, and other rosaries, and the prayers and hymns of her Saturday's Office, and her Psalters, and the vast number of books of devotion to her, and the worship that is accordingly given to her in

[i] Joh. Damasc. lib. 4. c. 15.
[k] Hom. 46. de Nativ. B. Mar. 1. tom. 2. p. 106.
[l] Anselm. Cant. de Excell. Virgin. c. 11.
[m] Ibid. c. 7.
[n] See Answer to Jesuit's Chall. from p. 478 to p. 495.
[o] Psalt. Bonav. p. 111, 112. Paris.

pretended catholic countries; whosoever shall consider what they say to her in those prayers and hymns, &c. which the *Speculum Beatæ Virginis*, just now published, has put together, may perhaps find there are causes of horror, which M. de Meaux is not so much concerned at as he ought to be: he may justly fear, that if the reformation did not give some little check, neither would these excesses stop here, though in many places nothing now remains to be done, but without any further reservedness, to erect altars proper to the blessed Virgin in every church, as the Jesuits[p] began to do in China.

O blessed God, look down in thy mercy upon the miserable estate of Christianity in so many parts of the Christian world!

When the blessed Virgin foretold that *all generations should call her blessed*, did she mean that all generations should worship her; would worship her images and pictures; would make her a mediatrix between God and man; would ascribe to her the power, not of prevailing with Jesus only for any thing, but of commanding him too; would offer Jesus himself a sacrifice in her honour; would burn incense to her; would use rosaries, hours, and psalters for her especial invocation and service; would institute and maintain fraternities for that service; would build temples and chapels to her, and altars, and by most solemn invocation every where, and by proper rites of religious worship, and by letting devotion run out to her more than to our Lord Jesus himself, to agnize her to be the Lady of Heaven and Earth, the Queen of the World? No, she did not mean thus, in saying that *all generations should call her blessed:* for thus *all generations* have not served her. Nothing of all this was done to her for several generations after Christ; nor any thing of it in comparison, till the dregs of time, till the decay of learning and piety made way for gross superstition.

The first beginnings of these corruptions were more general, but the improvements of them were chiefly owing to the see of Rome; which, as it grew in power and greatness, so it protected those abuses more effectually: a character very ill beseeming a church that pretends to be *the pillar and ground of truth.*

[p] Trigautii Exp. ad Sinas. lib. 5. c. 15. 20.

The wit of man could not devise any thing more servicable to error, to make it spread in the world, and to fix it, than that a powerful see grasping at supremacy, and pretending to infallibility, should take it under her wing.

This see is the source of all those oppositions which they have met with that demanded a reformation; it is this see alone which hath obstructed a general reformation, when Christendom was otherwise well disposed towards it.

Therefore when reformation, by common consent, was made impossible by the see of Rome, what remained but that the national churches should reform themselves?

Our reformation was a return to primitive antiquity; and that it may prove a leading example, let us pray without ceasing, that *God would bring into the way of truth all such as have erred, and are deceived.*

THE TEXTS

EXAMINED

WHICH PAPISTS CITE OUT OF THE BIBLE,

FOR THE

PROOF OF THEIR DOCTRINE

CONCERNING

SEVEN SACRAMENTS,

AND THE

EFFICACY OF THEM.

PART I.

THE sacraments are such public blessings to the Christian state, and of such great concern to all Christians, that we cannot sufficiently admire and adore the great goodness of God in appointing them, and making them the instruments of so many comforts and blessings to us. We believe that Christ did only institute two sacraments; with these we are content, because we believe Christ knew best what were necessary for his church, and was so good as not to have omitted to institute more sacraments, if more had been necessary for the welfare of his church.

We have two sacraments which are certainly of our blessed Saviour's institution, for which we are thankful, and with which we are satisfied; had our Saviour instituted more sacraments, we should have been more thankful, and should have had greater obligations to gratitude. And this should satisfy the gentlemen of the church of Rome, and abate their wrath and severities against us, since though we reject those five additional sacraments, which they would be obtruding upon the world, yet we do it not because they are sacraments we do not like, but because they are not sacraments at all, because they

are not Christ's sacraments, who never appointed them, but the church of Rome's sacraments, which did appoint them, or advance them to the dignity of sacraments. And this we take to be a sufficient reason why we should reject the five additional sacraments, since neither the church of Rome herself, nor all the churches of the world together, are able to institute one sacrament; and this is what their learned men dare not deny; and therefore they are careful always to lay claim to the scriptures, and to affirm, that in the New Testament we find the institution of every one of those sacraments, which they teach, and we of the church of England refuse.

We are more than willing to be tried by the word of God, and will refer the decision of this controversy with the church of Rome, about the number of the sacraments, to the holy scriptures; and it is my business at this time to examine the proofs which they of the church of Rome allege out of the scriptures, for their doctrine of seven sacraments.

But before I enter upon the examination of their texts, it is altogether requisite that we should set down the number of sacraments according to the church of Rome, and state the nature of a Christian sacrament, or else all that is said on both sides will neither tend to the ending this controversy about the number of the sacraments, nor edify any reader, much less those of ordinary capacities, for whose sakes especially this method and design was laid, of disproving popery out of the word of God itself.

The sacraments of the church of Rome are these seven: Baptism, the Lord's Supper, Confirmation, Penance, Orders, Matrimony, and Extreme Unction. Bellarmine was not able to produce any texts for the number of these sacraments, and it would be unreasonable to expect or demand any, since it is certain the holy scriptures are very far from asserting so many sacraments.

This number of the seven sacraments was a long time in raising; in the times of the apostles, and for several centuries of the church afterwards, the sacraments were but two, Baptism and the Lord's Supper. In the ninth century the number was increased but to three; for we find Rabanus Maurus, the great archbishop of Mentz, (in his treatise concerning the institution of clerks,) mentioning and explaining only three sa-

craments, Baptism, the Body and Blood of Christ, and Chrism or Confirmation. But after this, in the twelfth century, the number was grown up to the full, and either Hugo de S. Victore, or Peter Lombard, was the first who taught that there were seven sacraments; so that for all their pretensions to antiquity, and to uninterrupted tradition, the church of Rome is not able to produce any one writer that taught her number of sacraments, before the church of God was near twelve hundred years old; and yet notwithstanding so great reason for moderation and tenderness, as ought to be drawn hence, the council of Trent was so severe and positive, as to curse all those who should dare to affirm that there were either more or fewer sacraments than those seven, which I have put down before.

This is the number of the sacraments about which the controversy is betwixt us and the church of Rome. I must next consider the nature of a Christian sacrament; and herein there will be none occasion for controversy. The council of Trent was so much set upon determining the number of the sacraments, and so hasty in letting fly her anathema against any that should dare to dissent from her, that she forgot to declare what was the true and proper nature of a Christian sacrament, which should in prudence have been stated and settled first.

However, the Catechism drawn up and published afterwards by order of the council of Trent will give us satisfaction herein. In the Catechism we meet with two definitions of a sacrament: the one out of St. Austin, which makes a sacrament to be "a visible sign of an invisible grace, instituted for our justification;" the other, of the Catechism itself more expressly, that "a sacrament is a sensible thing, which by Divine institution hath a power not only of signifying, but of causing holiness and righteousness."

This definition gives us the true notion of a sacrament, and agrees in every branch of it with that definition of a sacrament which we find in the Catechism of our own church in her liturgy; so that here we have nothing to debate, but to set down what are the things requisite, according to both churches, to the nature of a sacrament.

The first is, That there be a visible sensible sign.

2. That it confer a sanctifying grace on those who partake of it.

3. That it have Divine institution.

These three are the qualifications of a true and proper sacrament; and these are so necessary, and of so determinate a nature, that both sides of us are agreed, that it is not in the power of any men or church to alter or change them. Bellarmine hath a chapter (in his first book concerning the sacraments) to prove, that it is unlawful either to add to, or diminish, or change the matter or form of a sacrament; and the chief reason he urges for it is, because the sacraments depend upon Divine institution, and have all their virtue from God; and therefore that cannot be a true sacrament, wherein we do not observe to keep to that which God hath instituted; and he makes it a grievous sacrilege to change the matter of any of the sacraments, and thinks the same charge ought to be laid to any that should dare to change the form of any one of them.

Well then, having learnt from the Roman Catechism what is the proper nature of a sacrament, and from Bellarmine, that it is unlawful, nay, a grievous sacrilege, to change the matter or form of any of the sacraments; I am now prepared to debate the controversy about the number of the sacraments, and to examine the proofs for the several particular sacraments.

As for two of the seven, to wit, Baptism and the Lord's Supper, they are allowed to be true sacraments by both sides, so that we have not any controversy with the church of Rome as to their being sacraments or no; and therefore we must set them two aside. However, to explain to vulgar capacities the nature of a sacrament, and all the requisites of it, I will instance in the sacrament of Baptism, and shew every one of the three essentials of a sacrament to be in it.

1. That baptism was instituted by God the Son is evident from Matt. xxviii. 19, where the apostles are commanded to go to all nations, and make disciples of them, *by baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.*

2. That there was a matter or outward visible sign appointed for this sacrament, and that that visible sign was the element of water, is apparent from this and many other places of the New Testament, particularly from Acts x. 47, where Peter's question is, *Can any man forbid* WATER, *that these should not be* BAPTIZED?

3. That this sacrament of baptism doth confer on the person

baptized, the grace of remission, of adoption, and sanctification, is as plain from several texts, from Acts ii. 38, where the people are called upon to be baptized *for the remission of sins*; from Acts xxii. 16, where baptism is said to *wash away sins*; from 1 Cor. xii. 13, where *by one Spirit they are baptized into one body*; and, to name but one text more, from 1 Peter iii. 21, where baptism is directly said to *save us*.

Here we see, not only the true nature of a sacrament, but how plainly every one of these are laid in scripture. I come now to examine, whether Bellarmine hath had as good success in shewing, that every one of the five additional sacraments, which his church would obtrude upon us, hath all these qualifications of true sacraments, and that they are as visible in scripture as those which belong to the sacrament of Baptism.

I will begin with their sacrament of Confirmation; the nature of which it is somewhat difficult to find. Bellarmine hath not dealt ingenuously with us herein, as it shall be made appear by and by; and the council of Trent will not yield us much help, since she was more careful to curse people that denied Confirmation to be a sacrament, than to define the nature of it: one thing however we must thank her for, the letting us know that the matter of this sacrament is chrism.

We must then, to understand and find out what this sacrament of Confirmation is, have recourse to the Roman Catechism[a], and especially to pope Eugenius's instruction for the Armenians in the council of Florence; from both which we form this description of Confirmation, that it is an unction with chrism upon the forehead, in the form of a cross, by the hands of a bishop, by which the person confirmed doth receive strengthening grace from Christ the author of it. In this description of Confirmation we meet with all the requisites of a true and proper sacrament. First, we have the visible sign or matter of this sacrament, chrism, which is a compound of oil of olives and balsam. Secondly, We have the grace conferred by it, viz. strengthening grace. Thirdly, We have the Divine institution of it, that Christ himself was the author of it. Besides these, we have the form of administering this sacrament in these words, "I sign thee with the sign of the cross, and

[a] Catech. Rom. pars 2. de Confirm. c. 3.

confirm thee with the chrism of salvation, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

This is a full and satisfactory account of the nature of this sacrament from their most authentic books. And now my business is to see what texts of scripture the Romanists are able to produce, to prove all these things. Bellarmine will not be drawn in here; this account of Confirmation, though attested by the constant visible practice of his church, he cannot away with; he was wise enough to know that the matter of this sacrament, viz. chrism, was utterly a stranger to the scripture, and therefore he was aware how he engaged for it.

However, Bellarmine is resolved to prove this sacrament from scripture; but then he spoils the whole business; for instead of chrism's being the matter or visible sign of this sacrament, which the council of Trent itself, the Catechism, and pope Eugenius's instructions say it is, he very boldly makes imposition of hands with prayer to be the matter; and upon this he undertakes to prove Confirmation a sacrament against Chemnitius, and to shew every one of the three requisites of a sacrament out of the scripture. 1. That this sacrament of Confirmation hath a promise of grace. 2. That it hath a sensible sign with the form by which this grace is applied. 3. That there is a Divine command for the ministration of this sacrament.

For the proof of the first, That this sacrament hath a promise of grace, he alleges John xiv. 16, *And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever:* John xv. 26, where the Comforter is said to be sent to testify of Christ: John xvi. 8, *And when he* (to wit, the Comforter) *is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:* Luke xxiv. 49, *But tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until you be endued with power from on high;* and lastly, Acts i. 8, *But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me,* &c.

I have put all these texts together, because they all relate to the very same thing, and therefore it was most requisite they should be answered together. Here is a promise of Christ to his disciples, (troubled to hear of his departure from them,) of his sending to them the Holy Spirit to be their comforter, to be their guide and assistant and supporter. This promise

we find fulfilled on the day of Pentecost, after his ascension, when the Holy Ghost appeared like cloven tongues, and sat upon each of them, and endued them with supernatural gifts and graces. And now what is all this to Bellarmine's purpose, or the proof of Confirmation? Here we meet with a particular promise to the apostles, particularly applied and made good to them: all which is nothing to the proving of a promise of strengthening grace annexed to the sacrament of Confirmation, which is the thing Bellarmine undertook, and was to prove. Could Bellarmine have proved that it was by Confirmation that the apostles received such extraordinary assistances of the blessed Spirit, it had done his business, and effectually proved his point; but he was so unhappy as not only not to say it himself, but to prevent, as much as in him lay, any one else affirming that; for immediately under his proofs he tells us, that the apostles, by a singular miracle and blessing, did receive the promised grace without any medium or sacrament on the day of Pentecost; and therefore certainly without Confirmation. So that his first undertaking of proving the promise of grace to this sacrament of Confirmation hath miscarried.

He next undertakes to prove this sacrament hath an outward or sensible sign, and that this sign is imposition of hands with prayer, from Acts viii. 17.

But before I examine and give the true import of that text, I must debate with Bellarmine this point a little. Here he asserts imposition of hands with prayer to be the sensible sign or matter of this sacrament of Confirmation; and thereby contradicts his own church; for not only the council of Trent says that chrism is the matter or sign of this sacrament, but the Roman Catechism doth as positively assert the contrary; the instructions of pope Eugenius, for the Armenians in the council of Florence, do not only assert the contrary, but tell us expressly, that Confirmation or Chrism is now given in the church, instead of that imposition of hands mentioned Acts viii. 17. But I have a better witness than all these to oppose Bellarmine with, and that is, Bellarmine himself; for though here he asserts imposition of hands to be the sensible sign or matter of confirmation, yet within eight chapters of this we are upon, he doth set it down for a proposition, that CHRISM or UNCTION is the MATTER of the sacrament of Confirmation;

so that Bellarmine hath brought matters to a fine pass, and is for overdoing his business, by proving this sacrament hath two signs, or else he must contradict himself.

The truth is, Bellarmine was forced to make a little bold with himself; and therefore, knowing that chrism, which his church had made the matter of Confirmation, could no ways be proved from scripture, he was forced to make imposition of hands the matter of this sacrament, which might have some pretences there.

But Bellarmine's contradicting himself is not more apparent here, than his strange disingenuity in palliating this matter, when Chemnitius had told them that the passage about imposition of hands in the Acts made nothing for the church of Rome, since they had laid aside imposition of hands, and had brought chrism into its place: Bellarmine is not ashamed to deny it, and to affirm that imposition of hands is still continued among them, and that the bishop in Confirmation doth twice lay his hands upon the person confirmed; once when he stretches his hand over them in prayer, the other time when he touches their forehead in anointing.

But such fetches are not becoming so learned a man as Bellarmine, nor such little arts as cannot be excused from untruth; for first, by their Pontifical it appears only, that the bishop stretches his hand TOWARDS the person to be confirmed; and I hope I need not insist on proving, that this is not laying his hands UPON that person. And for the anointing on the forehead, would any one but he, that knows not what to say, and yet will be saying something, affirm this to be laying on of hands; when the bishop touches only the forehead of the person, touches him only with his thumb, with the end of it only? He that will prove imposition of hands is used in the confirming with chrism in the church of Rome, may as easily prove that imposition of hands is used in baptism, when the minister holds his hand over the child's face to baptize it, or in the communion, when the priest puts the wafer into the communicant's mouth.

But to pass all this shifting; let us suppose for a while that imposition of hands is the matter of the sacrament of Confirmation in the church of Rome; and then see their text for it,

Acts viii. 17, *And they laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.*

This is the place chiefly insisted upon by the church of Rome for the proof of their sacrament of Confirmation. That a laying on of hands was used here, cannot be denied; but that this was a rite of a sacrament instituted, ought to be proved. Bellarmine is not able to shew that our Saviour commanded such an imposition of hands for such a purpose; and that, he knows, is necessary to make any thing of Divine institution.

But that which utterly deprives them of any assistance from this place, is, that if this text concern the sacrament of Confirmation, then when the church of Rome doth use the imposition of hands mentioned in the text, she doth confer the same Holy Ghost that was conferred in the text. This nobody can deny me, since, in both the other sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, all men grant that the same grace and benefits are conferred in the administration of those sacraments now, that were conferred from the very institution of them. Upon the granting of this, then, I demand to be shewn those miraculous effusions and assistances of the Holy Ghost upon the use of Confirmation now, that were visible then upon the apostles' imposition of hands. It must be acknowledged, that the church of Rome doth not pretend by her sacrament of Confirmation to confer any of those extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost which were conferred by the apostles. How then, I pray, does she confer the grace of the text, if she cannot and does not confer the grace mentioned there, viz. the Holy Ghost? There is no foundation thence for her sacrament of Confirmation.

And this is that which puts the matter beyond debate; for that by the Holy Ghost in this text is meant, not such a sanctifying grace as is necessary to the nature of one of their sacraments; but the miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost, the very same gifts with those conferred upon the apostles themselves at the day of Pentecost, is abundantly apparent from the consideration of the effects. Upon the apostles receiving the Holy Ghost, Acts ii, we find them immediately filled with the Holy Ghost, and enabled with the gift of tongues. Upon the Sa-

maritans receiving the Holy Ghost in the text, by the imposition of the apostles' hands, we find them endued with the very same power, for in the next verse it is said, as before of the apostles, that the Holy Ghost was given them, which did discover itself in some visible manner to Simon Magus, as well as the rest, who otherwise would not have had occasion to bid money, for the having power by imposition of hands to confer the same Holy Ghost; and what those visible effects were, we may justly gather from Acts xix. 6, compared with this place, where upon St. Paul's imposition of hands, the *Holy Ghost came on them, and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.*

From all which together it is evident, that since by the Holy Ghost in the text is meant the miraculous gifts of it, such as the gift of tongues, of prophesying, of miracles, and the like; and the church of Rome neither can nor does pretend to confer such extraordinary power by her sacrament of Confirmation; there is no footsteps of her sacramental grace of Confirmation here; nor any reason for her to ground that sacrament upon this text.

But let us again suppose, that by the apostles' imposition of hands here, was conferred only the ordinary gift of sanctifying grace; yet this will not prove such imposition of hands to be a sacrament, except they of the church of Rome can shew, that Christ did command and institute such a ceremony of imposition of hands for such a purpose. And this is what Bellarmine did undertake, in the third place, to shew for this sacrament of Confirmation. But instead of a text, he only falls to concluding that the apostles would not have used such imposition of hands, if they had not had their Lord's command for it. But this is concluding without using premises; and this is begging the question; for as to the rite of blessing by imposition of hands, the apostles needed no more a command from our Saviour for that, than for kneeling at their prayers, both the one and the other being the frequent and known practice of the nation of the Jews, to whom the apostles did belong, and therefore requiring no commands for the use of them.

Before we can then grant to Bellarmine, or to the church of Rome, that Confirmation is a sacrament, they must prove that it was instituted by Christ; which Bellarmine is not able to do:

that it hath an outward visible sign appointed and set apart for it; which he was not able to do: and, lastly, that it had a power of conferring sanctifying grace to the person confirmed; which Bellarmine is no more able to prove than either of the other two. I am sure the texts he hath brought have been far enough from doing it for him.

Bellarmine hath two more texts, which do not so much concern the proving Confirmation to be a sacrament, as that chrism was the matter of it. Certainly Bellarmine did look upon his own privilege to be very great, or his adversaries' memories and judgments to be very small, that he can so formally in one part of a book set himself to prove that imposition of hands was the matter of the sacrament of Confirmation, and allege scripture for it; and in another part of the same book, and within seven chapters of the former, set himself as formally to prove that chrism, made of oil of olives and balsam, was the matter of that sacrament, and allege scripture too for the proof of this: the first of his texts for which is 2 Cor. i. 21, 22, *Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.*

From this place Bellarmine gathers, that by the anointing mentioned here, is either meant the outward ceremony of anointing used in Confirmation, or an allusion is made to it: but to give a brief answer to this, Bellarmine supposes what he should prove; he supposes there was then such a sacrament as Confirmation, but he should have proved it: he supposes that anointing with chrism was used then in this Confirmation, but he should have proved this too. Without this he hath no foundation, either for his outward ceremony of anointing in this place, or for an allusion to it. The text itself is serviceable for no such purposes, the whole purport of it being, that God had given his Holy Spirit, which is metaphorically called the unction from above, to those disciples, for to strengthen and confirm them in all holiness.

His other place is 1 John ii. 27: *But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.* This text falling in so di-

rectly with the other, needs but a word to answer it. Nothing is more plain than by *unction* here is meant the holy Spirit of God, which is here said to abide in them, to teach them, and to be truth itself. Can Bellarmine affirm any of these things concerning his chrism of oil of olives and balsam? Does it abide in the faithful inwardly, does the oil teach them that are confirmed all things, or is the oil of Confirmation truth itself? To avoid the imputation of trifling as much as Bellarmine did in producing these texts, I will not spend any more words about them. But I must not forget the author of the Touchstone of the Reformed Gospel, who has another text for Confirmation in reserve.

It is Heb. vi. 1, where laying on of hands is reckoned as a principle of the doctrine of Christ; and he tells us, that by laying on of hands here is meant Confirmation. But this should have been proved as well as said; for as to the laying on of hands mentioned here, it is altogether disputed among commentators whereunto it does belong; whether to imposition of hands in ordination of pastors; or to that imposition in reconciling of penitents to the church; or to the imposition of hands on the sick; or to that used by the apostles for conferring the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost; or for that imposition of hands which from apostolical institution was used by the bishops in ratifying and confirming that baptism to be perfect, which had been administered by priests or deacons; or lastly, for that imposition used to persons new married. When the author of the Touchstone, or any friend for him, hath determined which of the several impositions is meant here, it will be time enough to offer him another answer to this place.

Upon the whole, then, the reader cannot but see how little reason the church of Rome had to make a sacrament of Confirmation; and to what odd shifts cardinal Bellarmine was put to make some sort of a plea for her: he was forced, in order to the having any shew of benefit from Acts viii. 17, to deny the matter of Confirmation now in use in his church; and by urging that imposition of hands was the matter of that sacrament, to prove upon his own church that she was guilty of a grievous sacrilege in altering and changing the matter of that sacrament. However, after all his shifts and his pains

herein, there is not one syllable in scripture for the Romish sacrament of Confirmation. There is no institution of this sacrament to be met with there; not the least mention of their chrism there; nor any promise set down there of a sanctifying grace annexed to this sacrament. Every one of these requisites are owned by Bellarmine himself to be necessary to the advancing any rite to the being of a sacrament: since then every one of these is wanting to this pretended sacrament, we ought to conclude that there is no scripture which proves Confirmation to be a sacrament.

Of the Sacrament of Penance.

For the better understanding of this pretended sacrament of Penance, and the ground of their mistake about it in the church of Rome, we ought to know that the Romish doctors do not consider penitence in as much as it is a virtue of the soul, consisting of a detestation of sin, and a love of holiness, but as it shews itself outwards by certain sensible actions, such as confession is, or the like. It is upon this account that they have made it a sacrament of the New Testament, when it hath the priestly absolution joined to it.

To prevent therefore any mistakes about this matter, it is requisite to explain here what things they are in which we are agreed as to repentance, and what things they are about which our controversy at present is with the church of Rome.

We do acknowledge, as much as they can, the necessity of repentance in persons of years of discretion, and do look upon it to be so indispensably laid upon us, that it is impossible to be saved without repentance.

We are not against this repentance's discovering itself outwardly to the world; a truly penitent man cannot but freely testify it both by his words and actions, according to that degree of hatred which he now hath against sin, and that affection which he now hath for works of holiness.

Nay, further, we add, that if any man, finding himself depressed and troubled in conscience, by reason of the nature or circumstances of his sins, discovers to his spiritual pastor the state of his conscience, as to a spiritual physician, to receive from him such comforts and directions as are necessary for his condition and his cure; we cannot but commend his prudence.

So far are we of the church of England from discouraging any such care in spiritual concerns, that in our Liturgy it is sufficiently recommended to all pious Christians, and particularly in the exhortation about preparation for the worthy partaking of the holy communion, this very application to the minister of God's word for ghostly counsel and directions about our spiritual state, is recommended to all who find themselves labouring under any doubts or scruples concerning their condition, and the nature of their sins.

But notwithstanding all this, and our agreement with the church of Rome thus far, we cannot see any reason to join with the church of Rome in making this repentance a sacrament of the new covenant; and our reason is, because we cannot find in scripture all those qualifications and requisites to the nature of a true sacrament annexed to their pretended sacrament of Penance. We can find neither the institution, nor the matter or visible sign, nor the form of this sacrament of Penance there. They of the church of Rome say, they do find all these things in scripture; my present business is to inquire where.

Some of our adversaries are for finding the institution of this sacrament of Penance, or repentance, in the fourth chapter of St. Matthew [b], and the first of St. Mark [c], where our Saviour bids them, *Repent, and believe the gospel.* But the council of Trent has spoiled these men's guesses, for that hath defined that penance was no sacrament before our Lord's resurrection. And certainly, if this text of St. Mark be so proper to establish the sacrament of Penance, why cannot we as well conclude thence that there is a sacrament of faith, our Saviour bidding them there to *believe the gospel*, as well as to *repent?*

It was for this reason, therefore, that that council was for seeking the institution of this sacrament in John xx. 22, 23, where our Saviour says to his apostles, *Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them.*

This text is Bellarmine's sole foundation for the sacrament of Penance. He observes, that there is in these words a plain and direct promise of remission of sins; and thereupon his next business is to gather hence some sensible sign or matter

[b] Matt. iv. 17. [c] Mark i. 15.

for his sacrament of Penance; and he does it hence, because that the power which our Saviour gives to the ministers of the gospel cannot be exercised without some exterior sign, as well on their part as on the part of the penitent. But to answer this,

There is no doubt to be made, that our blessed Lord in this place doth confer the power to forgive sins on the ministers of the gospel, as far as may be consistent with their condition; we cannot deny neither that he hath promised to ratify their ministry, in freely granting his pardon to all those to whom they have declared the forgiveness of sins under condition of repentance. However, we desire to be shewed where the sensible outward sign of this promise of forgiveness of sins is to be met with; and where the commandment was given to the church to observe and to partake of it? Bellarmine and his brethren gather it hence, that the penitent sinner ought to testify his repentance in order to the receiving of his pardon; and that the minister cannot declare the remission of sins without some exterior sign.

But, first, the institution of sacramental signs ought to be certain and determined; not left to the fancies and humours of every particular person, as in this case it is, while one expresses his penitence one way, and makes that the sign of this sacrament, and another person expresses his another way, and makes that the sign of this sacrament; at which rate could men express their repentance in a hundred different manners, they would thereby make a hundred different signs for this one sacrament.

Secondly, it is not sufficient to make a thing a sacrament, because it hath some sort of a sign with a promise annexed to it; otherwise the repentance which John the Baptist and the other prophets of the Old Testament preached, had been sacramental also, and ought to have been reckoned for a sacrament. Our Saviour says, Matt. vi. 14, *If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:* now would Bellarmine, or any of their men of sense, think fit hereupon to ground a sacrament, under pretence that our Saviour had made a promise in these words, and that men cannot pardon one another without some exterior sign to express it to one another? In another place he hath promised his grace and his favour to them that assemble themselves in

his name: this cannot be done without some exterior sign: we must then, according to the Romish writers, have the institution of a new sacrament in those words of our Saviour.

Certainly sacramental signs, or the matter of sacraments, were never left by our blessed Saviour to the discretion of men, to establish what they should think good therein, but were determined and appointed by God himself; and this, Bellarmine himself, when he is treating about the sacraments in general, is so far from denying or doubting, that he makes it a grievous sacrilege to change or alter the matter of any one sacrament: without this, as I have already observed before, while the opinions and thoughts of men are so very different, every man would be making and coining sacraments according to the variety of his fancies.

We have an instance of this extravagant and unreasonable fancy among the doctors of the church of Rome, who are indeed agreed thus far, that there is a sacrament of Penance, but are, notwithstanding, at mighty disputes among themselves, as well about the nature, as the form of this their so much contended for sacrament of Penance. One denies confession to make any part of this sacrament; a second assures us, that contrition, confession, and satisfaction make up the matter; that is to say, are the element or sign of this sacrament. A third will have the whole essence of this pretended sacrament to consist in the absolution of the priest; a fourth is for holding, that absolution is no more than the form. Whosoever will be at the pains to examine into these things will find nothing here that ought to be called a sacrament.

The council of Trent was willing to put an end to these controversies, and declared in favour of them who make contrition, confession, and satisfaction to be the matter, that is to say, the element or sacramental sign, here.

But this determination of that council is as easily disproved as any of the particular doctors' opinions just mentioned. For,

First, contrition cannot be the sensible sign of this sacrament, because it is a thing internal in the heart of the penitent, and it hath no resemblance at all to the justifying grace which is signed by it, inasmuch as the justifying grace doth rejoice and restore the soul, but contrition doth afflict and abase it.

2. Confession cannot be any more than contrition the sign

of this sacrament, because its business is to declare the sin, and neither to declare nor exhibit the grace of the sacrament.

3. Satisfaction cannot be a sign, because it hath no resemblance at all to remission of sins; and absolution is often given without it, upon the bare promise of it, which oftentimes neither is nor can be performed by the penitent, who, for all that, hath had already the priestly absolution. In a word, suppose those three actions of the penitent sinner had had some resemblance and analogy with the justifying grace which they are said to convey; yet for all that, they cannot be sacramental signs, because they are the voluntary free actions of a man, and not natural signs, which are made to signify by an effect of Divine institution; which thing these three want.

Is it not a strange fancy to make such a sacrament as is administered partly by the people and partly by the priests, a sacrament, that is, as to the form of it, administered to-day, but as to the sign, or at least part of the sign, is administered two or three years hence? As it happens when the priest enjoins satisfactions which are not to be accomplished by his own order in less than two years' time, and yet gave absolution to the penitent at the very hour he made his confession and testified his contrition.

Suppose further, that the confession and contrition were only feigned and pretended, and that the person absolved takes no care in the world to perform the satisfactions enjoined him by the priest, and that the priest mistook in giving absolution to such a person, with the intention of conferring a true sacrament; will not this be a perfect chimera, made up of nothing else but contrarieties; a form without matter; a sacrament without any thing to administer it with? It is certain, that the priest cannot have any certain knowledge whether he that comes to confession be a hypocrite or no; and consequently, when he is giving the sacramental absolution, he cannot be assured that he administers a true sacrament.

In fine, I should be glad to understand why Penance should be any more a sacrament now, than it was under the old law. Why John the Baptist, nay, our Saviour himself, that preached repentance, were not able, or had not power, to administer the sacrament of Penance, as well as any priests now in the world.

These pretend indeed, that before our Lord's resurrection his ministers had not the power of giving absolution; but this is advanced for no other end than to mount the priests of the present age above the prophets, and above Christ's forerunner himself, John the Baptist. However, at least our Saviour himself had this same power while he was upon earth, before his passion or resurrection; we find him exercising it towards some, to whom he declared in particular that *their sins were forgiven.*

I cannot see what reply any can make in defence of those who have asserted, that before our Saviour's resurrection no pastor had power to give absolution, while we find our Saviour practising it, as well as John the Baptist, long enough before. They will perhaps reply, that our Lord Jesus Christ, John the Baptist, and the prophets under the old testament, did not make use of the sacramental words, and say, "I absolve thee." But this is very easily answered, and may be retorted upon them, that if we ought to conclude that neither the prophets, nor St. John Baptist, nor our Saviour himself, did forgive sins upon repentance, because we do not find it recorded that they made use of the form, "I absolve thee," &c., they must give us leave to conclude the same thing against the apostles, and against all pastors, even after our Saviour's resurrection, because we cannot find, and, which is more, are sure that nobody else can, that ever the apostles or the pastors of the church are recorded in the New Testament to have forgiven sins by the form of absolution now in the church of Rome, in the words, "I absolve thee," &c.; and, which is more, the text itself, upon which this whole sacrament of Penance is built, to wit, *Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them*, hath not the word *absolution* in it.

After all, if in these words, *Whose soever sins ye remit*, the Romish masters find the sacerdotal absolution, which is the form of their sacrament; why may not we affirm, upon the same principles, that the next words, *and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained*, do point out to us the form of a sacrament, which ought to be looked upon as a sacrament directly opposite to the first, the pretended sacrament of Penance.

To be short, I cannot but conclude that this text out of St. John (which is the only text that Bellarmine hath to allege

for the proof of his sacrament of Penance, though he, to make an appearance that he had more, begins with his *firstly*, but had no *second* for all that) does not in the least prove any of those things which Bellarmine pretends to conclude from it. The remission here spoken of concerns the apostles' ministry, who had this large commission to forgive the sins of all people: *Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted*; in opposition to the Jewish state, which confined all the benefits and blessings of the church of God to their own tribes, excluding all the world besides: this remission did concern all sins of whatever kind, in opposition to the Jewish state, wherein some sins were irremissible, such as idolatry, for which the guilty person was to die. And this greatest and most enlarged blessing of remission of sins was dispensed to all men, by admitting them by baptism unto the benefit of it; and this is often enough expressed in the New Testament, where people are said to be baptized *for the remission of sins.* This seems to be the full and true sense of this place, that this power of remission given to the apostles by our blessed Saviour was imparted to unbelievers by the sacrament of Baptism, and to those within the church, by restoring such of them to the communion of the faithful, who by their scandalous lives and actions had been separated from the Christian assemblies.

And this interpretation of this place will very much assist us to the disproving of the pretended sacrament of Penance; since we see here, that penance is so far from deserving the honour of being a sacrament, that it is merely and properly a qualification for our worthy partaking of the sacrament of Baptism.

To conclude; since we have no institution of such a sacrament mentioned in the scriptures; since we can meet with no outward visible sign set apart for it; (which, by the bye, to give the church of Rome their due, they themselves do not pretend to, who, instead of some visible element, set up some words, gestures, and actions, which never yet were owned for an element or material sign;) nor, lastly, meet with any particular justifying grace annexed to such a sign; since the only text which Bellarmine had to produce in defence of this pretended sacrament ought to be taken in a quite different sense to that Bellarmine would use it in, and does concern the remission of

sins by the sacrament of Baptism; we ought to affirm, that the Romish sacrament of Penance was not of Christ's institution, and therefore ought not to be reckoned as one of his.

PART II.

Of the Sacrament of Orders.

Before I undertake to examine this pretended sacrament, it cannot be amiss to remind the reader in a few words of the nature of a sacrament. The church of Rome and we are agreed thus far in this matter, that for any thing's being a true and proper sacrament of the New Testament, these three qualifications be required: 1. That there be a visible sensible sign or matter of this sacrament appointed by our Saviour: 2. That it confer a sanctifying grace on those who partake of it: and, 3. That it have Divine institution.

It is requisite the reader should carry these things in his mind, that so he may be the better able to judge betwixt the church of Rome and us, whether Orders is or deserves the name of a sacrament.

I must also, before I examine their scripture proofs for this pretended sacrament, inquire after the nature of it, and wherein it consists, and will make their order of priesthood the instance. They tell us then, that the council of Florence hath put an end to all controversies about the matter and form of the order of priesthood, by her declaration, that the matter or visible sign of the order of priesthood is the delivery of a chalice with wine in it, and of a paten with bread upon it, into the hands of the person to be ordained; and that the form is *Accipe potestatem*, &c. "Receive thou power of offering sacrifice in the church for the quick and dead."

Here then we find that a chalice with wine in it, and a paten with bread on it, delivered to the person ordained, are the matter of this sacrament of Orders; and that the form of ordaining is by giving a power to offer sacrifice for the quick and dead. There are two things more for them to shew—that the delivery of this chalice and paten with that form does confer and consign to the person ordained sanctifying grace, and that all these things are of Divine institution—and then I will acknowledge that they have effectually proved Orders to be a true sacrament.

Bellarmine is as ready as can be to undertake the defence of this pretended sacrament, but dares not begin without shuffling and disguising the matter. He was sufficiently aware, that the council of Florence had declared the delivery of the chalice and paten to be the sensible sign or matter of this sacrament; and he knew as well, that there was not a word of these things in the scriptures; and that he himself had already owned, that it was not in the power of any persons whatsoever either to institute or alter the matter of any of the sacraments. What was to be done then? It was impossible to disown or dissemble his knowing these things, and yet he must prove from scripture itself, that Orders was a true sacrament.

He begins[d] very formally with premising, that three things are necessary to this sacrament—the outward visible sign, the promise of grace, and the institution by God: and assures us all these are to be met with in ordination, and does produce several texts of scripture for it, which it is my business at this time to examine.

As for the outward visible matter in this sacrament of Orders, he tells us, that it is imposition of hands; and instances in Acts vi. 6, where deacons were ordained by imposition of hands; Acts xiii. 3, where Barnabas and Paul were ordained bishops by imposition of hands; Acts xiv. 23, where presbyters or elders were ordained in the same manner; and lastly, in Timothy's ordination by imposition of the hands of the presbytery, 1 Tim. iv. 14. 2 Tim. i. 6.

We can readily acknowledge, that in most of these places mentioned by Bellarmine, imposition of hands was the rite of ordination then, as it is to this day in the church of England; but our business is not to know whether imposition of hands was used with prayers in ordination, but whether imposition of hands was instituted and appointed by our blessed Saviour, to be the outward visible sign of a sacrament of Orders; and for this, Bellarmine himself was forced to own, that we read nowhere in scripture that our Saviour did appoint his apostles to ordain ministers by imposition of hands. I suppose the reason why we do not read any such thing there, is, because it is not there; and if it be not there, I think no more words need be

[d] Bellarmin. de Sacram. Ord. l. 1. c. 2.

thrown away, to shew that there is no institution of this visible sign of a sacrament of Orders there.

But there is a stronger prejudice against all that Bellarmine is proving here; and that is, the determination of his own church against him. Bellarmine tells us, imposition of hands is the matter of this pretended sacrament; the council of Florence tells us, that the delivery of the paten and chalice to the person ordained is the matter of this sacrament; and which of these should we believe? They both cannot stand. It would be tedious to expose all the wretched shifts Bellarmine used at this pinch; I cannot but mention that about the words of this council of Florence. To the objection, that imposition of hands could neither be the matter of this sacrament of Orders, (which Bellarmine asserted in his second chapter,) nor a part of the matter, which the shuffling cardinal contends only for in his ninth chapter, because the council of Florence had declared the delivery of the paten and chalice to be the matter of that sacrament, without taking the least notice of imposition of hands: Bellarmine answers, that the council did not explain the whole rite, but only a part of it. A solution that will serve to prove any thing by, since there is no fence against it; and any other person besides a Jesuit would have been ashamed to use it.

However, after all, to be kinder to Bellarmine than the council of Florence was, and to grant him that imposition of hands is part of the matter of this pretended sacrament of Orders; I cannot see what service this can do him, whose business was to prove the matter of this sacrament from scripture: Could he prove imposition to be a part from scripture, to what purpose is it, when he cannot prove the other part or parts of this matter thence? And his business was, if he understood it, to prove the whole matter of this pretended sacrament thence.

But Bellarmine is an unhappy man, and ought to have been so prudent as to let the proof of this pretended sacrament alone, since I am sure he was so learned as to see plainly that there was not the least foundation in scripture for their chalice with wine and their paten with bread, which the council of Florence had sacrilegiously made the matter of their pretended sacrament of Orders.

The next thing Bellarmine undertakes to shew is, that there

is a promise of sanctifying grace annexed to this sacrament of Orders. His texts for this are, 1 Tim. iv. 14, *Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery:* and 2 Tim. i. 6. *Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.* I have put his texts together, because they are almost in the same words, but do concern the same thing. By the *gift of God* in Timothy, mentioned here, Bellarmine would understand a sanctifying grace of God: but this can no ways be allowed from these texts; for by the *gift of God* here can be meant nothing else but Timothy's authority and ability for the work of the gospel, to which he had been ordained; this is evident from the word wherewith St. Paul expresses it; χάρισμα is granted to denote one of these gifts which are bestowed, not for our sanctification or justification, but for our abilities to this or to that purpose or ministry; as for example, the gift of healing, of miracles, of tongues, of prophesying, or the like, which are owned by the schoolmen in the church of Rome, to be *gratiæ gratis datæ*, not *gratum facientes:* not graces to sanctify us, as sacramental graces are, but graces to empower or enable to this or that work. This interpretation is favoured not only by the Fathers, but by some of their own church of Rome. St. Chrysostom, Theodoret, and Theophylact, understand by the *gift of God* here, διδασκαλία, doctrine, or the gift of teaching: others, among whom cardinal Cajetan, interpret it to be ἐπισκοπὴ, the gift of governing: Salmeron will have it to be the authority of teaching. All which come to the same, and confirm our interpretation, that by *the gift* here is not meant any sanctifying sacramental grace, but an ability to teach and govern the flock committed to his charge. And therefore there is no countenance from these texts to make ordination a sacrament, since they cannot help it to a sanctifying grace, which is owned to be necessary to every sacrament.

Bellarmine's last attempt, in favour of this pretended sacrament, is to prove that it was instituted by God. This in order of nature should have gone first, but it is the cardinal's way, when he knows not how to prove the institution, to put it last, and infer it from what he hath been talking before. I have

already observed, how he owns that we do not read in express scripture that our Saviour commanded his apostles to ordain ministers by imposition of hands; which is to give up his cause, when he was to prove it to be a sacrament: however, though in one page he has not express scripture for imposition of hands, yet in the other page he does give us, such as it is, an institution and command for this sacrament of orders out of Acts xiii. 2, *Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.*

But this text is far from proving the institution of their sacrament of Orders. All that it proves is, that the Holy Ghost did reveal to some of the prophets in the church of Antioch, that he would have them two ordained for the work whereunto he had called them: it is so far from proving an institution or appointment of Orders to be a sacrament, that it does not prove the institution of Orders themselves, which were certainly instituted long before, when our blessed Saviour breathed on his apostles, and committed to them the ministry of reconciliation. Nay, had Bellarmine's text here proved the institution of ordination, yet is there a vast difference betwixt proving that our Saviour appointed Orders in his church, and proving that Orders is a sacrament, which was Bellarmine's business, and he should not have confounded them.

His next text is Acts xx. 28,—*over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers.* A few words will serve to answer this text, which proves indeed that there are Orders, and ought to be a regular ordination in the Christian church, but does not offer one syllable towards the proving that Orders is a sacrament.

His last text is Ephes. iv. 11, *And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists,* &c. The same answer that was given to his last text is suitable to this, which proves just what the last did, and what all wise men grant, that there are Orders, and ought to be continued in the Christian church.

One ought not to wonder that so great a man as Bellarmine could bring such weak and trifling proofs, where the best were necessary, and all little enough; but it is not Bellarmine's, but his cause's fault, that is not capable of any just, nay, hardly plausible defence; however, he ought not to escape censure,

for that he would undertake to prove from scripture, that Orders was a true sacrament, when his own conscience could not but inform him that such an attempt was vain and impossible; and he could not be ignorant that that delivery of the chalice and paten, wherein his church makes the matter of this sacrament of Orders to consist, was not known to the church of God for almost a thousand years; that this was an invention of their own, and that therefore, according to his own doctrine, his church of Rome is guilty of a grievous sacrilege, in making that delivery of the paten and chalice to be the matter of a sacrament; which was never of Christ's, but of the church of Rome's institution.

Of the Sacrament of Matrimony.

If so little could be said by Bellarmine, for making Ordination a sacrament, what can we expect for this pretended sacrament of Matrimony, which of all the seven can have the least to be said for it? Bellarmine was very hard put to it upon this point, and turns himself and his arguments every way, to make some sort of a show, as if he had proved Matrimony to be a sacrament.

He does not abound with his texts here, as he was wont to do upon the other sacraments, but is for fetching this whole sacrament, institution, sign, and grace, all out of one poor text. Every one will easily guess the reason of this to be, because scripture is a stranger to Matrimony's being a sacrament of the New Testament.

I must therefore be the shorter upon this pretended sacrament, and produce Bellarmine's confessions, where we cannot have his texts. We have been all along agreed, that a Divine institution is necessary to a sacrament of the New Testament: we demand therefore, in order to our believing the council of Trent, which hath made Matrimony to be a sacrament, and hath cursed us if we will not say so too, to be shewn in what part of the New Testament Matrimony was either first instituted or made to be a sacrament.

One would wonder how it got into these men's heads to make that instituted in the New Testament which had been instituted in Paradise so many thousand years before. Bellarmine was not insensible of this very thing; and therefore, as to

our demand about proving the Divine institution of this pretended sacrament of Matrimony from some plain place in the New Testament, he begs our pardon, and will not be drawn in, but does however assure us, that it is to no purpose to labour so much about proving the institution.

But this is not to satisfy, but to cajole; and though he does not, because unable to do it, yet we do think it absolutely necessary for them to prove its institution, before we can believe it to be a sacrament.

Bellarmine therefore, knowing what straits he was in, is for taking a new method, and that is, for proving Matrimony to be a sacrament; and if it be a sacrament, says he, it must have been instituted by Christ, it must have an outward sign, and a sanctifying grace annexed to it.

All this is very true, that if Matrimony be a true sacrament, it necessarily hath all these qualifications; but the great danger here is, that Bellarmine will suppose it instead of proving it to be a sacrament. His text for proving Matrimony a sacrament is Ephes. v. 32, *This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.* From these words Bellarmine collects, and endeavours at large to prove, their sacrament of Matrimony. He pretends indeed, that they do not make it a sacrament merely because of the word *mystery*, or *sacrament*, in this verse; and he gives this reason, because the word *sacrament* is found in other places joined to some things which are not, for all that, advanced by them into the number of sacraments. But in answer to this, we can assure them, that if they do not ground this their pretended sacrament of matrimony upon the bare word here, they can find nothing at all to ground it upon; since all Bellarmine's reasons and shifts together will not be able to shew that the great mystery spoken of here does relate to the conjunction of man and wife; it is evident to all unprejudiced men, 1. that by *mystery* here, is meant no more than a great or surprising secret which we are unacquainted with. 2. That this great secret is meant by St. Paul to be the union betwixt Christ and his church: there is no need of words to confirm this, for St. Paul himself, as soon as ever the words were out of his pen, sufficiently explains wherein this mystery was, and whereto he attributed it: *But I*, says he, *speak concerning Christ and the church*; as

if he had said, "*This is a great mystery;* mistake me not, as if I looked upon the conjunction of man and wife to be a mystery, which is far from being such, being taught us, and implanted by the light of nature: no, my meaning is, that the union of Christ and his church is a great mystery."

Bellarmine was not content to prove Matrimony to be a sacrament from this text, but will needs see in it a promise of sanctifying grace too. I must confess some men's eyes are better than others'; however, I can give no reason why I should see nothing at all here. He will have it, that Matrimony signifies the spiritual union betwixt Christ and his church, and that it cannot signify except there be a spiritual union of their souls, and that there cannot be such a spiritual union without God give them grace.

But all this pleasant fancy hath no sort of foundation. And Matrimony hath not been hitherto proved a sacrament; and so all the rest falls to the ground. And further, why could not Matrimony signify the union of Christ and his church, without causing a sanctifying grace too? Cannot some things signify without effecting too? This is strange concluding, but what can help it, when men will be proving that which cannot be proved! He hath another text for his sanctifying grace of Matrimony, 1 Tim. ii. 15, *Notwithstanding, she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.*

Here Bellarmine finds four great blessings of Matrimony, faith, charity, holiness, and sobriety; that the wives received these in matrimony, or else the apostle would not have talked of their continuing in them.

But did ever man dream before at this pleasant rate? Whence is it that Bellarmine gathers that the wives have these gifts bestowed on them in Matrimony? Is there any other thing required of these more than of virgins or any other, who must, if they will be saved, continue in faith, charity, holiness, and sobriety, as well as any of the wives? At this rate, every state and condition of life may be made a sacrament. The true sense of the place is, that though the woman was first in the transgression, and so ruined man, yet that she shall make amends by bearing children, and bringing them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

His next text is 1 Cor. vii. 7, *But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that.* He argues from this, that matrimony is a gift of God and what then? Must it for that reason be a sacrament, and have a sanctifying grace? At this rate, we should have sacraments enow: and to go no further than this text, virginity must be a sacrament too, since it is, as much as Matrimony, a gift of God.

His last text is 1 Thess. iv. 4, *That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour.* In sanctification (to wit, says Bellarmine) which they received in Matrimony. This he says indeed, but the text does not; and our business is to hear that speak, and not Bellarmine. It is in vain to argue with a man, who from a duty incumbent on all men, married and unmarried, will, contrary to all logic and sense, be inferring a particular grace annexed to a particular sacrament.

And now what other judgment can be made of these things, than that Bellarmine was almost as much satisfied as any of us, that Matrimony can be no sacrament? He always used to insist on the Divine institution, on the outward sign or matter: we have had a great deal of ado about the grace, but nothing of news about institution, or the outward sign. Bellarmine knew his sacrament wanted these, and therefore was for making a great dust about the other. However, since Bellarmine cannot deny that no institution of this sacrament appears in the New Testament, that there is no outward sign, or matter, or form for it, to be met with there, and that his texts for a sanctifying grace were altogether forced and perverted from the sense given them by the best commentators; he ought to have concluded, if not with us, yet with their own canonists and Durandus, that Matrimony is not a true and proper sacrament.

Of the Sacrament of Extreme Unction.

We are now arrived to their last sacrament, that of Extreme Unction, which the council of Trent hath decreed to have been instituted by our Saviour himself, and published by his apostle St. James: it is called *Extreme Unction*, because it is the sacrament of those who are just dying, and is to be given to none but such as are looked upon to be past recovery. The matter

of it is oil blessed by a bishop, and the sanctifying grace, or effect of it, is the cleansing the person anointed from the remains of all sins, committed either by seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, or touching. This being the nature and a true account of this pretended sacrament of Extreme Unction, we must now see what texts the papists have to prove this sacrament.

The first text mentioned by Bellarmine is Mark vi. 13, *And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them:* but this text is not insisted on by Bellarmine, and he tells us that their own writers are divided; some making the anointing here and that in St. James to be the same, while others are as earnest, that this anointing in St. Mark cannot be their sacramental unction, since it plainly refers to miraculous bodily cures, whereas sacramental unction belongs to the soul properly, and is concerned about remission of sins. Bellarmine himself espouses this latter opinion, and one of his wisest reasons for it is, because those vile heretics, Luther, Calvin, and Chemnitius, were of the other opinion: and indeed it would have been very unseemly for a cardinal to be found in such company. We need trouble ourselves therefore no further with this text, than only to remark, that by the confession of our adversaries, the anointing in St. Mark was a ceremony of a miraculous cure of diseases, and that the effect of that anointing was a restoring the sick persons to bodily health; neither of which can by any means be brought to agree with the pretended sacrament of Extreme Unction; the anointing in which, according to the council of Trent, and Romish writers, respects the diseases of the soul, and the effect is a remission of sins.

But what was wanting in this will be fully supplied in the text from St. James, wherein Bellarmine tells us, we find all the requisites of a true sacrament laid down together: James v. 14, 15, *Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.*

Bellarmine triumphs with this text, but without any reason, since should it prove a sacrament, yet it does not prove their

sacrament of Extreme Unction: and there are these two plain differences visible betwixt this anointing in St. James, and the popish pretended sacrament of Extreme Unction: 1. That this anointing in St. James was to be administered to any that were sick; whereas the Romish Extreme Unction is to be administered only to those who are just a departing, and past all hopes of recovery: 2. The anointing in St. James was to restore them to bodily health primarily; but the Romish unction's design is primarily the cleansing of the soul, and remission of all the remainder of sins: and this is sufficient to shew, that the passage in St. James does not defend nor favour the pretended sacrament of Extreme Unction.

It is very easy to explain and evidence the two differences I have assigned. That the anointing in St. James was to be administered to any sick, is too plain: *Is any sick among you?* He does not say, Is any sick to death among you, but supposes all alike capable, if God pleased, of that anointing. I need not stay to shew that the Romish Extreme Unction is to be administered only to such as are looked upon as dying; upon which very reason they themselves call this extreme unction *sacramentum exeuntium*, the sacrament of the dying.

The truly remaining difficulty is, to prove that this anointing here did primarily respect bodily cures; that it did, cannot be denied us by those papists who make the anointing here and in St. Mark to relate to the same effects. Maldonate says they do: and then I am sure Bellarmine ought to grant us, that this anointing in St. James does relate to bodily cures, to a restoring the sick persons to health, since it is evident to a demonstration, that the anointing in St. Mark does relate to nothing else: it is plainly said there, *that they* ANOINTED WITH OIL *many that were sick, and* HEALED THEM.

But there is no need of any of their concessions to prove this; the passage itself in St. James cannot without violence be interpreted to any other sense; for upon the sick man's calling for the elders, and their praying for and anointing him, the effect, we are told, should be, that the prayer of faith should save the sick; by which can be only meant, the restoring him to bodily health, since to save a sick man is, in propriety of speech, to save or rescue him from his sickness, which is throughly confirmed by the next expression in St.

James, *and the Lord shall raise him up;* that is, restore him to his former strength and health.

This fair interpretation might be further confirmed from those ancient offices in the church for anointing the sick, in which the old prayers run for a restitution (upon anointing) to bodily soundness, and deliverance from all pain and languor: this however is sufficient to shew, how altogether unlike Extreme Unction this anointing in St. James was; in Extreme Unction they own and declare, that its proper end and design is the cleansing the anointed person from all remainders of sin; and not only their prayers upon that occasion, but the form itself of administering that unction, do themselves tell it us. So that what can be more different than these two unctions? And what reason has the Romish Extreme Unction to plead for its being the unction mentioned in St. James?

There is but one objection to be made to this interpretation, that this passage cannot relate wholly to bodily cures, since in the last words of it it is said, *and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.* In answer to which, we say, that we do not affirm that the effect is wholly bodily cures, but that this anointing does primarily and chiefly relate to bodily cures. As for the forgiveness of sins, it was sometimes the consequence of such a restitution to bodily health; but did not always attend it, since the apostle makes it to be when the person hath committed sins; in which words he could not mean any ordinary sins, for all men are guilty of them, and therefore all that were cured must have been forgiven. Also the apostle's supposition doubtless does relate to some extraordinary sin the sick person might have been guilty of, and for which God might inflict that sickness: so that the sense of this must be, that if the sick person had been guilty of some sin for which God did inflict that disease upon him, it should for his comfort be forgiven him.

And this passage is far from helping the Romish writers for their Extreme Unction, since it is plain this remission was not general to all sick persons, but was limited to some who might have been guilty of such a sin as brought that bodily sickness for a punishment upon him; but theirs in Extreme Unction equally concerns all, and their anointing does equally good to all, if it do any good at all, which I am sure it does not.

but is an instrument to delude and ruin poor souls that trust to it.

In a word, Bellarmine cannot but own that if this passage of St. James does not prove their pretended sacrament of Extreme Unction, they cannot prove it from scripture. I have proved that it is not to be found there; so that the Romish writers are bound to own at last with us, that the pretended sacrament of Extreme Unction hath no foundation in scripture, but that it was unjustly grounded upon a passage of St. James which did concern a miraculous cure of diseases, which was to cease, and hath long since ceased to be in the Christian church.

Having done with Bellarmine's texts, I have but one to consider from the author of the Touchstone of the Reformed Gospel, Mark xvi. 18, *They shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.* But with this wise author's leave, where is there a syllable here of Extreme Unction, or any unction at all? But suppose it had been, would it not plainly have referred to bodily health? Bellarmine shall answer this ignorant scribbler, and tell him, that this imposition of hands, or anointing, cannot relate to their sacramental unction; since it is not more plain that their sacramental unction does relate to the soul and its diseases, than that the unction pretended to in this passage does concern the body and its distempers.

Concerning the efficacy of Sacraments.

It would not at all answer the design of these papers, to perplex the reader with all the niceties and distinctions about this matter of the efficacy of sacraments in the Romish writers: it is sufficient to acquaint him that they differ as much as possible, and have been as far from being friends among themselves as with us. To make this matter as intelligible as we can, it is requisite to lay down how far we agree with the church of Rome as to the efficacy of sacraments, and wherein we differ from them.

We acknowledge, as well as they, that the sacraments were not instituted by our Saviour to be mere signs, but that they are efficacious of the grace for which they were instituted, and instruments to convey the grace to us which they signify. Our difference is about their nature, that is, what sort of

instruments they are; the council of Trent hath defined, that they confer grace *ex opere operato*; which, if I understand the explication of this barbarous phrase, is, that the efficacy of the sacraments depends neither upon the goodness of the minister nor of the receiver, but upon the work's being done, upon the sacrament's being rightly administered. The council adds indeed, that it is thus operative or efficacious only *non ponentibus obicem*, to those who do not put a bar in the way: their meaning in which is, that the sacrament does confer the grace of it upon every person that receives it, provided he have not a will directly opposite to the sacrament he is about to receive. As for instance, when he is to be baptized, that he be not resolved not to be baptized, or not to believe in the Trinity, or not to renounce his sins. The council certainly did put in this very wisely, or else they had made a strange thing of Christianity, and made it the derision of atheists and scoffers.

But we are sure they ought to have added more, and one reason is, because we believe that to baptize a man when he is asleep is not effectual to him, though we are well assured the man is not guilty of putting any bar in the way.

Upon the definition of the council of Trent, they are generally agreed since, that the sacraments do work their effect by virtue of an inherent quality fixed in them, as glowing iron heats water, or a charm works cures. And this is what we can by no means agree with them in, because such a virtue in the sacraments is contrary to the great design of Christianity, which is founded upon covenant, and consigns all its graces and benefits to those only who have such dispositions and preparations as it requires. Faith and repentance, and a resolution to lead a Christian life, are the conditions, without which no man receives the benefit of remission of sins in baptism: and not merely a resolution not to be pointblank opposite to the design of the sacrament: this were to make Christianity not only a quite different thing from what it is, but a most ridiculous thing too, when a man shall come to baptism (for instance) and tell the minister, Sir, I understand your baptism will have a most notable effect upon me, and forgive me all my sins, without giving me any trouble about it; I must confess I have no great knowledge of it, nor any preparation for it; but I hear these are not necessary. I do

assure you I do not mock you, and that I have no resolution not to be baptized, or to receive no benefit; and that, I hear, is all the qualification that you make necessary; which I assure you I have, or else I would not have come hither; and therefore pray, sir, baptize me.

Such doctrine, as it is derogatory to the temper of Christianity, so it is far from being taught or being countenanced in the scriptures. Bellarmine pretends to a great many texts for it, which I will briefly examine.

His first is a set of four texts out of Matt. iii. Mark i. Luke iii. John i. where John the Baptist says, *I indeed baptize you with water to repentance—He shall baptize with the Holy Ghost.* From this Bellarmine argues, that there is as much difference betwixt the efficacy of John's baptism and our Saviour's, as there is betwixt water and the Holy Ghost. Well, and suppose this should be granted him, yet how does this prove that baptism is efficacious by an inherent virtue? This indeed is Bellarmine's conclusion, but it is not in the text, nor any thing like it.

His second text is Mark xvi. 16, *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved:* that is, saith Bellarmine, baptism shall save him, which cannot be done but by washing away the filth of his sins. But how comes faith to be forgotten, and to have no share here? If Bellarmine conclude such effects for baptism, and we for faith, we must desire to know whether faith have that inherent intrinsic virtue which they talk of; but there is no reason to conclude any such thing of either of them, since all the text proves is, that salvation shall be the consequence of faith and baptism, and not that baptism doth work this by any inherent virtue, any more than incircumcision doth by an inherent virtue cut off a soul from Israel, notwithstanding it be said of it, *that the uncircumcised shall be cut off from his people.*

Bellarmine's third text is, John iii. 5, *Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*

I will add his other texts relating to the same thing, that so I may dispatch them together:

Acts ii. 38. *Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.*

Acts xxii. 16. *Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.*

Ephes. v. 26. *That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word.*

1 Peter iii. 21. *The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God).*

These are his texts; and now to what purpose are any of them brought here? It is granted that baptism is ordinarily necessary to salvation, that God hath made it the instrument of remission, of regeneration, and of salvation to us; but though this is all which these texts prove, yet this is not all which Bellarmine should have proved; his purpose was to shew, that baptism did work all these things by an inherent virtue, as a hot iron heats water; but these texts say no such thing, and some of them the contrary, for instance, Ephes. v. 26, where the sanctification is attributed to the word upon the washing.

His next text is Acts viii. 18. *And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given;* to which he adds 2 Tim. i. 6. *Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.* These two texts are nothing to the purpose; for we have already proved that Confirmation (to which they will have the first text to belong) is no sacrament, nor Orders, concerning which the other text speaks; so that being no sacraments, they have nothing to do in this controversy about the efficacy of sacraments. And further, I have above proved, that by *the Holy Ghost* in the text from the Acts is meant the extraordinary gifts of it, for tongues, miracles, and the like; and that by *the gift of God* in Timothy is understood only an ability and authority for to discharge the office in the church he had been ordained to.

The last text that Bellarmine troubles us with is 1 Cor. x. 17, *For we being many are one bread, and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread.* He argues here, that the participation of the *one bread* is the cause of our being *one body.* This is readily granted him; that as by participation of the sacramental bread in remembrance of Christ's meritorious passion we are united to Christ, so we are to one another by partaking of that *one bread*, and being united to the one Christ in his mystical body; and this is the sense of this place; but as to the sacramental bread's working this by an inherent virtue, there is not one word, or the least intimation in this place.

These are all Bellarmine's texts for the physical efficacy of his sacraments: how unserviceable they have been to him, the meanest reader cannot but see; and no wonder, since such pretensions are contrary to the method of Christianity laid down by our blessed Saviour.

Whosoever will examine the scriptures seriously, will find, that as the sacraments are covenants, so there are several qualifications required, without which the sacraments will be of no more efficacy to the person receiving them, than they would be to a dead man; for to the receiving any benefit by baptism, the scriptures inform us, that faith and repentance, with a resolution to be Christ's faithful disciples, are required of every one to be baptized; that upon the account of these they are admitted into covenant with God, and have a right to the merits and benefits of our Saviour's passion, which was undergone by him for the sins of the whole world.

Nor is the design of the other sacrament of the Lord's supper different from this; it is to remember us of the infinite goodness of our Saviour's dying for us, to unite us to Christ, and thereby to instate us, and confirm to us a share in his merits: none of which it doth or can do, without our being fitted by serious examination and hearty repentance for such an union with Christ; and this is sufficient to shew, that the sacraments do not work physically or like a charm, but that as good men upon such preparations receive the benefits and find the efficacy of each sacrament, so wicked men receive no benefit by them, nor can be united to Christ by them, which yet they would for all their wickedness be, if so be the sacraments received did as certainly work their effect, as a sharpened razor cuts, or fire burns.

To conclude; as we believe that the two sacraments were designed by God for blessings to us, to convey such grace and assistance as he thought fit, and not to be mere signs; so we cannot believe that God made them such physical instruments, or did give them such an inherent virtue, as to confer grace *ex opere operato* upon every receiver; because we are sure this would be to dishonour those things which are the most beneficial and most honourable in the Christian religion.

A

DISCOURSE

OF

PURGATORY.

INTRODUCTION.

THERE is so near a connection between the two points of purgatory and prayers for the dead, as they are now established in the church of Rome, that it is impossible to state the one as we ought, without entering on some consideration of the other. It has been so much the rather thought fit to give an account to the world of both these, in that the opinions of the primitive Fathers touching the state of the souls departed, and the early practice of praying for the dead founded thereupon, being not well understood by the generality nowadays, seem to give our adversaries a greater pretence to antiquity in these points, than in most others that are in debate betwixt us.

For what concerns the latter of these, I shall in the next Discourse say what I suppose may be sufficient to shew, how little grounds the ancient custom of praying for the dead in the primitive ages of Christianity will afford to the practice of those who pretend to be their followers in the same custom now. As to the business of purgatory, which is our present concern, we willingly allow it to have been of very venerable antiquity, and to have exceeded, not only our reformation, but even Christianity itself for some hundreds of years. The truth is, the church of Rome is beholding for this doctrine, as well as for many other things in her religion, to her worthy ancestors the heathen poets and philosophers: and though I cannot tell how far cardinal Bellarmine's[a] argument will hold good, to prove it from thence to have been the dictate of right reason itself, because this might engage us to give up the

[a] Bellarm. de Purgat. lib. 1. cap. 11. p. 612. Colon. 1620.

cause to paganism, not only in the points of the worship of images and inferior deities, &c., which perhaps the cardinal may be content to think the voice of nature too; but even as to all the other parts of their superstition, in which they were more universally agreed than in their notion of a purgatory; yet for what concerns the thing itself, we do not deny but that many of them did certainly believe it.

Eusebius recounts it of Plato[b], that he divided mankind into three states; some, who having purified themselves by philosophy, and excelled in holiness of life, enjoy an eternal felicity in the islands of the blessed, without any labour or trouble, which neither is it possible for any words to express, or any thoughts to conceive. Others, that having lived exceedingly wicked, and therefore seemed incapable of cure, he supposed were at their deaths thrown down headlong into hell, there to be tormented for ever. But now, besides these, he imagined there were a middle sort[c], who, though they had sinned, yet had repented of it, and therefore seemed to be in a curable condition; and these he thought went down for some time into hell too, to be purged and absolved by grievous torments; but that after that, they should be delivered from it, and attain to honours according to the dignity of their benefactions.

Now that they supposed those who were in this state might receive help from the prayers and sacrificings of the living, the complaints of the ghosts of Elpenor in Homer[d], and of Palinurus in Virgil[e], abundantly shew. And indeed the ceremonies used for their deliverance, as described by those poets[f], so nearly resemble the practice of the present Roman church, that were but their poems canonical, it would be in vain for the most obstinate heretic here to contend with them.

It must then be confessed that our adversaries in this point have at least four hundred years' antiquity, not only against us, but even beyond Christianity itself. And I suppose I

[b] Præparat. Evangel. lib. 11. cap. 38. pag. 568. ed. G. L. Paris, 1627.

[c] Καὶ οἱ μὲν ἂν δόξωσι μέτριως βεβιωκέναι, πορευθέντες ἐπὶ τὸν Ἀχέροντα, ἀναβάντες ἃ δὴ καὶ αὐτοῖς ὀχήματά ἐστιν, ἐπὶ τοῦτον (*l.* τούτων) ἀφικνοῦνται εἰς τὴν λίμνην, καὶ ἐκεῖ οἰκοῦσί τε, καὶ καθαιρόμενοι, τῶν τε ἀδικημάτων διδόντες δίκας, ἀπολύονται εἰ τίς τι ἠδίκησε. Τῶν τε εὐεργεσιῶν τιμὰς φέρονται, κατὰ τὴν ἀξίαν ἕκαστος.

[d] In Odyss. lib. 12.

[e] In Æneid. l. 6.

[f] Vid. ib. Odyss. 30. Virg. Æneid. l. 5.

may, without any injury to the memories of those holy men who have been our forerunners in the faith, say, that it was the impression which these opinions of their philosophy had made upon them, that moved them, when they became Christians, to fall into conjectures concerning the state of the soul in the time of separation, not very much different from what they had believed before.

It is not necessary to recount the errors of Origen as to this matter; who turned even hell itself into a purgatory[g], and thought that not only wicked men, but the very devils too, might be so purged in it, as to come forth angels of light. St. Augustin tells us[h], that the Platonics were of an opinion not much different from this, who though they would not have any sins past unpunished, yet supposed that all punishments, whether of this life or the next, were designed to amend, and therefore that whatever pains awaited men after death, they were all purgatory. And though this conceit of Origen has been condemned by the church as heretical, yet there remained other opinions, for some centuries after, not much differing from it[i]. Some thought that "all men whatsoever should in the end be saved;" others, and among these St. Jerome himself, that "all Christians should be delivered[l]:" some who restrained their charity yet more, still allowed salvation "to all that died within the pale of the catholic church;" to which others finally added this further condition, that they had not only stood firm to the faith, but also "been charitable to the poor." Which last circumstance is the very same that Virgil from the Platonics again required in those who should be translated to the Elysian fields; in which therefore he places not only them whose virtue and piety had entitled to that happiness, but also by their "alms had made others mindful of them."

Quique sui memores alios fecere merendo[m].

But not to insist more particularly on these things; three opinions there seem to have been among the ancient Fathers,

g Bellarmine, l. 1. de Purgat. c. 2. p. 873.

h De Civitat. Dei, l. 21. c. 13. p. 793. t. 5. Lugd. 1664.

i See for all those, St. Austin de Civit Dei, l. 21. c. 18—22.

l August. Enchirid. ad Laurent. c. 67. p. 64. tom. 3.

m Virgil, Æneid. l. 6. v. 664.

concerning the state of men after death, more generally received.

[n] 1. That the souls departed do not straightway go to heaven, but remain in a quiet and pleasing state, free of all troubles and pains, yet earnestly expecting their final consummation in glory.

2. Another opinion there was, which from the credulity of Papias[o] became almost the universal belief of the first ages of Christianity, concerning the millenary kingdom of Christ[p]; that our blessed Saviour, before the final judgment, should come down from heaven, and raise from the dead those of the faithful whose piety had been most eminent and approved; and with them reign a thousand years at Jerusalem, in great plenty, and with extraordinary splendour; and that this was that which St. John meant by *the first resurrection*, and at the end whereof the other was to follow.

3. A third opinion, and that too embraced by many of the most ancient Fathers[q], was, that all men being raised up at the last day, should pass through a certain probatory fire[r], in which every man should be scorched and purified; and some be tormented more, others less, according as they had lived better or worser lives here upon earth.

Such were the opinions of the primitive Fathers as to this matter. It is evident to any one that shall please to compare these with the account I shall hereafter give of the present Roman purgatory, how vastly different they were from what is now proposed to us as an article of faith. But yet from these opinions it is, that those of that communion impose upon the unwary their pretence of antiquity for this doctrine; whilst whatever those holy men have written of a third place, meaning the place of sequester[s] before mentioned, but especially of the purgatory fire at the end of the world[t], they presently

[n] Bellarmine, de Sanct. Beat. l. 1. c. 5. p. 713, owns it to have been the opinion of Tertullian, Lactantius, and Victorinus Martyr: but Sixtus Senensis more fairly confesses it of many others. Bibl. lib. 6. annot. 345. p. 714. edit. 1626. Colon. 4to. Irenæus, Justin Martyr, Clemens, Origen, Prudentius, Ambrose, S. Chrysostom, S. Augustin, Theodoret, &c.

[o] See Eusebius, Hist. Eccles. l. 3. c. 39. edit. Valesii.

[p] Justin Martyr contr. Tryph. p. 89. C. edit. Henr. Steph. Gr.—Irenæus ap. apud Euseb. Hist. Eccles. lib. 3. cap. 39. —Tertullian passim, &c.

[q] This is asserted by almost all the Fathers of the primitive church.

[r] Δοκιμαστικόν.

[s] First opinion.

[t] Third opinion.

apply it all to their own fancy, and which in those first ages found no manner of entertainment.

It is, I know, generally pretended by those of the other communion, that St. Augustin at least began to favour their opinion. And indeed I will not deny but that he does sometimes speak of a purgatory after this life; but yet so, as that it refers either to the same purgation we before spake of, at the end of the world, or else to that[t] grief which he imagined those souls who had been passionately tied to the things of this world might still retain in their place of sequester: and which he therefore thought to be the meaning of that obscure place of St. Paul, 1 Cor. iii. 12. so confidently produced by our adversaries on all occasions in favour of their doctrine. But all this he proposes with so much doubt and uncertainty, as plainly shews it to have been in this Father's time so far from an article of faith, that he durst not affirm any thing at all concerning it.

Thus then had the Roman doctrine of purgatory no manner of foundation in the primitive church. About 600 years after Christ, pope Gregory the Great first began to give countenance to it. The public practice of praying for the dead continuing still in force in the church, and those opinions of the primitive Fathers upon which that was first established, being now no longer received with that universal belief they had heretofore been, it was but natural to seek out some other grounds for a practice which they saw so generally received, and yet could not well tell what account to give of the reason of it. Let us add this, that about that time a sad barbarity began every where almost to overspread the world: the Goths and Lombards in Italy, the Franks and Burgundians in France, the Vandals and West-Goths in Spain, the Saxons in Britain, destroying almost all learning out of the world. From henceforth miracles and visions governed the church: the flames of Ætna and Vesuvius were thought on purpose to have been kindled to torment departed souls. Some were seen broiling upon gridirons, others roasting upon spits, some burning before a fire, others shivering in the water, or smoking in a chimney. The very ways to purgatory were now discovered; one in Sicily, another in Pozzueto, a third nearer home, in Ireland: one found out by the help of an angel, another of

[t] Vid. August. loc. supr. citat. Enchirid. cap. 67. ad Dulcit. quæst. 1. &c.

the Devil. Insomuch that pope Gregory himself was carried away with these illusions, and which some are not ashamed, even at this day, to support.

By these means came purgatory first established in the Roman church, in the sixth, seventh, and eighth centuries; but yet, still the article continued rude and unpolished. Pope Gregory discovered how certain souls, for their punishment, were confined to baths and such like places on earth, but he had not as yet found out any one common place for them to be tormented in in hell. Nay, for some ages after, it seems not to have been risen to a matter of certainty, so far was it yet from being an article of faith. Insomuch that in the twelfth century many doubted of it, as we may gather by that expression of Otto Frisingensis[u], ann. 1146, "That there is in hell a place of purgatory, wherein such as are to be saved are either only troubled with darkness or decocted with the fire of expiation, some," says he, "do affirm;" plainly enough implying that all did not believe it.

It is not necessary to say what opposition this novel invention met with in the several centuries in the Latin church, from Claude bishop of Turin in the ninth century, from Peter Bruges and Henry his successor at Tholose; from the Waldenses in France and Piemont, among whom this doctrine was never received, and who are therefore condemned by cardinal Bellarmine himself[x] on this account. I will rather observe, that the eastern churches have continued all along free from this error. For, however the pope and his ministers so far prevailed with the Greeks in the council of Florence[y], as to persuade them to yield to a kind of pretended union in this matter; yet both their apology, penned by Marcus Eugenicus[z], archbishop of Ephesus, and presented to cardinal Cusan, and the deputies of the council of Basil[a] the year before, wherein they positively declare, "that they neither had received any such doctrine from their ancestors, and therefore neither would they ever accept it," plainly shews they had no such tradition

[u] Lib. 8. Chron. cap. 26. Esse apud inferos locum purgatorium, in quo salvandi vel tenebris tantum afficiantur, vel expiationis igne decoquantur, QUIDAM asserunt.

[x] Bellar. de Purg. l. 1. c. 2. p. 571. 572.

[y] Session. 25ta. Counc. Labb. tom. 13. pag. 492, and p. 1135.

[z] Vid. apud Sixt. Senens. Bibl. l. 6. Annot. 259. p. 667.

[a] June 14, 1438.

amongst them; and the proceedings of the same Marcus, and of the Greek church after, neither of which would be drawn to consent to this union, more fully confirm it. And it is well known how the Christians of Asia and Africa[b] do not at this day consent with the Roman church in this point, as some of their own authors confess; though others, not so ingenuous, would endeavour to persuade the contrary.

But however this be, purgatory is now become an article of faith, and of too comfortable an importance to be easily parted with; nor have I the vanity to hope I shall be able to argue those men out of it[c] who *by this craft gain their living*, and will, no doubt, therefore be as zealous in defence of it, as ever Demetrius was of *the great goddess Diana* upon the same account. But for those whose interest it rather is to be freed from these terrors after death, which serve only to enrich the priests, and keep the laity all their lives in fear and subjection; I hope to satisfy them, that these are only imaginary flames, invented for gain, established upon false grounds, and kept up by artifice and terrors to delude the people, but which themselves many of them no more believe than did that great cardinal who minded one day to pose his chaplain[d], and proposed this question to him; "How many masses would serve to fetch any soul out of purgatory?" To which when he appeared, as well he might, unable to reply, the cardinal thus pleasantly solved the doubt, "That just so many masses would serve to fetch a soul out of purgatory, as snowballs would serve to heat an oven."

But it is time now to come to a closer examination of all these things; and in order thereunto let us first see,

SECT. I.

What it is that the church of Rome means by purgatory.

Had the doctrine of purgatory been as clearly explained by the council of Trent as it was peremptorily defined in it, we should have had the less need to make the present inquiry[e].

[b] Histoire Critique, p. 5. 20 edit. Francfort, 1684, for the Greeks, id. p. 69. cites Gabriel Sionita, affirming the same of the Melchites, Purgatorium nullum existere pessime crediderunt, id. p. 72. That the Georgians believe a purgatory, but not such as the C. R. See concerning the Armenians, p. 141. Job Ludolph. Hist. Æthiop. Lat. shews the same of the Ethiopians, that they deny a purgatory, l. 3. c. 5. n. 67, 68. See Bellarm. l. 1. de Purg. cap. 2. p. 572.

[c] Acts xix. 25, &c.

[d] C. Richlieu.

[e] See it at the end of the council of Trent, p. 225. edit. Labbé Paris, 1667. fol.

In pope Pius the Fourth's Creed it is only said in general terms, that "they constantly believe that there is a purgatory, and that the souls there detained are helped by the suffrages of the faithful." Nor is their decree concerning it at all more clear; it only adds, "that they are assisted by the suffrages of the faithful [f], but especially by the acceptable sacrifice of the mass; and therefore, that the bishops should diligently take care that the wholesome doctrine of purgatory, delivered by the holy fathers and councils, should be believed, held, and taught by all the faithful in Christ."

Indeed, in the foregoing sessions [g], we find two other things defined with reference to this doctrine, but such as conduce very little to the better understanding of it: "1st, It anathematizes those who shall say, that after the grace of justification the fault and guilt of eternal punishment is so remitted to the penitent sinner, that there remains no guilt of a temporal punishment to be paid by him, either now or hereafter in purgatory, before he can attain to the kingdom of heaven:" and 2ndly, In their canons of the mass they resolve, "If any one shall say that the mass is not a propitiatory sacrifice, or that it ought not to be offered for the living and the dead [h], for their sins, pains, satisfactions, and other necessities, let him be anathema."

And accordingly the bishop of Meaux, in his Exposition of the Doctrine of the Catholic Church, contains himself within the same bounds. "Those," says he, "who depart this life in grace and charity [i], but nevertheless indebted to the Divine justice some pains which it reserved, are to suffer them in the other life. This is what the council of Trent proposes to our belief touching the souls detained in purgatory, without defining in what their pains consist, or many other such like things."

The Misrepresenter calls it, "a place or state where souls departing this life [k], pardoned as to the eternal guilt or pain, yet obnoxious to some temporal penalty, or with guilt of some venial faults, are purged and purified before their admittance into heaven."

[f] Session 25. p. 174.
[g] Session 6. Can. 30. p. 47.
[h] Session 22. Can. 3. p. 135.
[i] Expos. Bish. Condom, sect. 8. p. 15.
[k] Papist Misrepr. sect. 23. p. 30.

Alexander Natalis is yet more precise: he distinguishes what is of faith in this matter and what not, and thus resolves[l], that it does not at all belong to the faith, "1st, concerning the place, whether it be in this world, or upon earth, or in the dark air where the devils are; or in the hell of the damned, or in some place underneath nearer the earth, that the souls are purged: 2ndly, concerning the quality of those sensible pains which the souls held in purgatory undergo; whether it be true and corporeal fire, or whether darkness and sorrow, or any other torment inflicted by the justice of God, punishing them after a wonderful, yet true manner: 3rdly, concerning the duration of these purgatory pains, how long the souls are detained there. For though Soto thought that no soul continued in purgatory above ten years, yet it is a matter altogether uncertain how many years those pains shall last. The only thing therefore," he says, "that is in controversy between the catholics," as he calls them, "and protestants, is this, whether the faith teaches that there is a state of the dead in which they shall be expiated by temporary punishments, and from which they may be freed, or otherwise helped by the prayers of the church."

But though this then be all which these men suppose is to come into our inquiry; yet I must observe, that the Catechism set out by order of the council of Trent determines concerning the pains themselves that they are caused by fire. "There is," says that Catechism[m], "a purgatory fire, in which the souls of the faithful being tormented for a certain time, are expiated; that so a passage may be opened for them into their eternal country, into which no defiled thing can enter." So that I do not see how they can choose but allow the pains of purgatory to be determined by them to the particular kind of fire.

St. Thomas is yet more precise, not only that it is fire in which the souls are tormented, but that it is the very "same fire that torments the damned in hell and the just in purgatory[n]." And Bellarmine himself confesses[o], that almost all

[l] In dissert. sæc. 4. dissert. 51 p. 552.

[m] Catechism. ad Parosh. part 1. cap. 5. sect. 5. p. 41. Colon. 1684.

[n] In 4 Sent dist. 21. qu. 1. art. 1.

[o] Bellarm. de Purg. lib. 2. cap. 6.

their divines teach, "that the damned and the souls in purgatory are tormented in the same fire and in the same place."

But yet, since they suppose that nothing ought to come into this dispute but just what is defined in the council of Trent, we will take the state of the question according to their own desire, and inquire only in the words of cardinal Bellarmine,

"Whether there be any such place (as they suppose) in which, as in a prison, the souls are purged after this life, which were not fully purged before: that so being cleansed, they may be able to go into heaven, where no unclean thing shall enter."

SECT. II.

That there is no ground for such a purgatory in the holy scripture.

TO demonstrate this, it will not, I presume, be expected that I should shew the weakness of all those places, which though some of their controvertists have alleged, yet the more learned among them freely confess to have nothing to the purpose in them. Cardinal Bellarmine has put together nineteen several texts out of both Testaments, but yet was far from thinking them all to his purpose [p]; confessing either of all, or at least of all out of the Old Testament, except the first, that they are but probable arguments. Of these Alexander Natalis utterly rejects sixteen; and one he mentions not, as indeed he needed not to do it, when Bellarmine himself had set a particular mark upon it [q], as impertinent.

The Misrepresenter, unwilling to see his cause reduced to two only places of holy scripture, restores again to its authority [r] one of those which Natalis had rejected [s], and adds another, which they had all of them overlooked, but very unfortunately; for that, 1st, they have ever been esteemed [t] two of the most difficult and obscure places of all the New Testament, and therefore certainly must be very unfit to build an article of faith upon; and then, 2dly, for St. Austin, upon whose authority he would be thought to allege them; it is evi-

[p] De Purgat. l. 1. c. 3. p. 578. a.

[q] Ibid. cap. 8. arg. ult. sect. Utuntur nostri, p. 601. D.

[r] 1 Cor. iii. 15.

[s] 1 Pet. iii. 15.

[t] Bellarm. de Purg. l. 1. c. 5. p. 582. A. Natalis Alex. dissert. 41. sæc. 4. p. 378.

dent that he utterly mistook the design of that Father, if he thought that he understood them of the Roman purgatory, as both his words evidently shew, and his own masters, Natalis [u] has ingenuously confessed for the one, and Bellarmine [x] for the other. So that then I may reasonably presume to have answered the design of the present section, if I can give a fair account of those two places which they all agree to be the principal supports of this doctrine [y]; and from whence some of them doubt not to say, it may be demonstratively concluded.

Now the first of these is that noted passage in the 2 Maccab. cap. xii. where (they tell us) it is said [z], "that money was sent to Jerusalem that sacrifices might be offered for the slain; and it is recommended as a holy cogitation to pray for the dead." This, not only Bellarmine [a] ranks in the front of his scripture-proofs, but the Misrepresenter has again advanced it, and Natalis doubts not to call it a *demonstrative testimony.*

But to all this our exceptions are very just:

1st, That the book itself is not of sufficient authority to establish a matter of faith.

2dly, That if it were, yet is not the text by any means clear for the proof of that to which it is applied by them.

1st, For the authority of the book itself.

Thus much our adversaries themselves confess [b], and I think we need desire no more: that this book was never received by the Jews as canonical [c]: that St. Jerome therefore rejected it out of the canon of the Christian church: that it was not of a long time [d] after received into it: insomuch that in pope Gregory the Great's time [e], that is, 600 years after Christ, it was lawful to doubt of its authority; for, indeed, that pope himself did not receive it as canonical. And sure then it ought not to be thought unreasonable in us to doubt of the authority of a book, which being a part of the Old Testament, was yet never received by the Jews as canonical, and of whose authentical-

u Vid. in loc. 1 Cor. iii. 15. p. 377, 379.

x Bellarm. de Christi Anima, lib. 4. cap. 13. p. 455. per tot.

y Natal. Alex. in loc. p. 362.

z Misrepres. n. 23. p. 28.

a Bellarm. de Purg. l. 1. c. 3. Misr sect. 23. p. 28. Natalis ubi supr. p. 364.

b See Mons. du Pin, Biblioth. Dissert. Prel. p. 59. &c.

c Bellarm. de Purg. l. 1. c. 3. p. 575. Natalis Alex. sect. 4. par. 3. dissert. 41. p. 365.

d Bellarm. ibid. p. 576. A. B.

e Canus, l. 2. c. 10. ad. 4.

ness therefore the primitive Christian church for the first 600 years declared themselves altogether unsatisfied. But,

2dly, To allow the book the credit which they desire, yet still the text is by no means clear for the proof of that to which it is applied by them. The story itself is this, "That when Judas, the day after the battle, came to bury the bodies of them that were slain[f], they found under the coats of every one that had been killed things *consecrated to the idols of the Jamnites*, which was forbidden to the Jews by the law. This discovered to them the cause of their death, and how they were slain by God for their sin. Hereupon Judas and all his men betook themselves to prayer, and besought God that the sin might wholly be put out of remembrance. And Judas upon this occasion exhorted the people to keep themselves, by their example, from the like sin; and, lastly, he made a collection among them of a sum of money, and sent it to Jerusalem, to offer a sin-offering unto the Lord."

This is the story, and the design of all is very easy; that Judas, considering the danger he had been in by the sin of these men, prayed to God that it might not be imputed to the people, and offered a *sin-offering for the congregation* according to the law; remembering what the whole people had once suffered in the like case for Achan's transgression[g].

But our adversaries will have this sin-offering to have been for the dead, and the history expressly says it was so. I answer, 1st, the history says no more than what we have set down, that Judas did this: for the rest, it is the conjecture of the historian, not an historical narration of what design Judas had in it. Now that this could not have been his design, is evident, 2dly, in that neither the law of Moses, nor any other part of the holy scripture, makes any mention of any such sacrifice, either prescribed or allowed of, for the dead. And, 3dly, had the law in some cases approved of sacrifices for the dead, yet certainly it could not have done it in this, idolatry being one of those sins for which there was no offering allowed, nor any atonement to be made for it.

But what then is it that this historian designed? I reply, it was this: That Judas, by this sacrifice, made an atonement

[f] 2 Maccab. xii. ver. 39, &c. [g] Joshua vii.

for the dead, to the end that their sin being forgiven they might have a happy resurrection. This he expressly declares, ver. 44, 45, "For considering," says the historian, "that there is an excellent reward laid up for those that die godly, which was a holy and godly thought[h]; he therefore made an expiation for the dead, that they might be absolved from their sin." For many of the Jews then, as some Christians have done since, thought offerings might be made for the forgiveness of those sins after death, that were not forgiven before. Therefore, seeing that these soldiers died in a grievous sin before they had time to repent, the historian supposed that Judas might have designed this offering to expiate their offence, that so they might obtain a happy resurrection. But now this was only the conjecture of the historian, and as before we have seen very ill grounded, to be sure far enough distant from the Roman purgatory. For, 1st, this respected the future resurrection; that, the present sufferings of the dead. 2dly, The prayers here spoken of were offered for men who died in a mortal sin; but the papists deny that any such go to purgatory, or can receive any benefit from the prayers of the living. 3dly, Whatever becomes of all the rest; how was it possible that these prayers should have been designed for the slain to deliver them out of purgatory, when, if we will believe the papists themselves, their souls were not there, but either in hell or in the limbus, where they supposed the souls of the ancient Fathers were detained, till our Saviour Christ descending thither set them free.

So that which way soever then we consider this passage, it cannot give us any manner of satisfaction. If we look upon it as a part of that history, the book is not canonical; nor was ever esteemed so by the Jews, or by the Christians of the first 600 years: if we take it as the history of what Judas did, this respected not the dead at all; nor by consequence can it belong to purgatory: if according to the opinion of the Relator, it regards the dead indeed, but then with reference to their future resurrection, not their present punishment; and so is still impertinent: if, finally, according to the hypothesis of

[h] Εἶτ' ἐμβλέπων τοις μετ' εὐσεβείας κοιμωμένοις κάλλιστα ἀποκείμενον χαριστήριον δοία καὶ εὐσεβὴς ἐπίνοια. Ὃθεν περὶ τεθνηκότων τὸν ἐξιλασμὸν ἐποιήσατο τῆς ἁμαρτίας ἀπολυθῆναι.

the papists themselves, it is utterly impossible it should belong to purgatory, because there was, as yet, no such place, and therefore these soldiers could not be there, or by any sacrifices be delivered from thence. And this, I hope, may be a sufficient reply to this first passage.

The other, from whence they also tell us their doctrine of purgatory may be demonstratively concluded, is in the xiith of St. Matth. ver 32; where our Saviour, speaking of the *sin against the Holy Ghost*, tells us, that *it shall not be forgiven, neither in this world, nor in that to come.*

He would, I believe, be thought to make a very strange conclusion, that should, without more ado, argue thus abruptly from this passage; "Therefore there is a purgatory:" and, indeed, they themselves are sensible of it. And therefore Bellarmine confesses, that according to the rules of logic, purgatory cannot be inferred from hence: but according to the rules of prudence, he thinks it may, because that otherwise, he says, Christ must be said "to have spoken improperly; which we ought not to suppose he did." But if there be nothing in this place to prove purgatory, according to the rules of logic, I suppose it must be some mistake then, in that which he told us before, that it may be demonstratively inferred from thence: for as for the rule of prudence, that will at most make it but very probable.

But indeed this rule will fail them as well as the other, as we shall evidently see in examining the proofs which they make from it. Now their argument lies thus: "Our Saviour Christ says, *that the sin against the Holy Ghost shall not be remitted, neither in this world, nor in that to come:* we must therefore suppose that some sins shall be remitted in the world to come, or else our Saviour spake improperly, which, according to the rules of prudence, we may not say. Now *the world to come* must signify the state of the soul between the day of every man's death, and the final resurrection, because that after that no sins shall be remitted: and it must be to those who are in a middle state, because those who are blessed are already forgiven; and those who are damned shall never be remitted."

This is the sum of their arguing from this place: but now if it appear that we can have no manner of assurance of any of

these suppositions, much more if it be clear that not one of them is true, then I presume it will follow, that neither is it prudentially credible that our Saviour here intended to establish a purgatory, but rather altogether certain that he did not.

1st, then, our Saviour says, that *the sin against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven, neither in this world, nor in that to come;* therefore they conclude some sins shall be forgiven *in the world to come.*

I answer: It is most certain that some sins shall be forgiven in the world to come, even all those that are forgiven in this, and for which, therefore, God shall not call us to account at the last day. As if one should say, To him that repents and believes, his sins shall not be imputed, neither *in this world* nor *in the world to come;* that is, they shall never be imputed. And so both St. Mark and St. Luke interpret the phrase[1]: *He shall not be forgiven*, says the one; *he shall not be forgiven for ever*, says the other: what is this to purgatory?

But our adversaries are more acute: Christ says, *the sin against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven, neither in this world, nor in that to come;* therefore some sins that are not forgiven in this world shall be forgiven in the world to come. This indeed is no consequence according to the rules of logic, as Bellarmine acknowledges: but how then does it follow? Because that otherwise our Saviour Christ would have spoken improperly, which, according to the rule of prudence, we ought not to say. The cardinal might have added, according to the rule of civility and good breeding too. But still, how does this appear? Why, because that otherwise it would have been impertinent to say that it shall not be forgiven, *neither in this world, nor in the world to come*, if no sins should be forgiven in the world to come that are not forgiven in this.

I answer, 1st, he might have said it to exaggerate his speech, and so the better enforce the heinousness of the crime; and it is a thing very ordinary on such occasions to use many words when one would have been sufficient: but, 2dly, he might, and certainly did do it, to prevent the mistake of the Jews, and cut off all hopes of pardon for this sin. Two things there were which they understood by the עלם הבא, or *world to*

[1] Mark iii. 29. Luke xii. 10.

come; the *kingdom of the Messiah*, and *the state after death;* and in both these they thought a remission might be had for some sins that were not otherwise to be forgiven: our blessed Saviour, therefore, to take away all hopes of remission for this sin, and make the deeper impression upon their minds, bids them not flatter themselves with any such fond expectations; that this was a sin that should never be forgiven them, *neither in this world, nor in the world to come;* i. e. neither now nor in the kingdom of the Messiah; neither in the hour of death, nor in the day of judgment. But,

2ndly, They suppose that *the world to come* must signify the time between every man's death and the general resurrection.

But now for this there is no manner of ground, either in the holy scripture or in the language of the Jews; nor can it be with any propriety so esteemed. For *the world to come* cannot be supposed to begin till this world ends, i. e. till the time be, that, according to their own confession [k], purgatory shall be no more. Whatever then our Saviour Christ means by *the world to come*, or however sins shall be remitted there, it cannot be understood of purgatory, which now is in this present world, and in the other shall be destroyed.

3rdly, They suppose, lastly, that the persons whose sins shall be forgiven are not the perfectly just, in whom there is no spot of sin remaining; nor yet the damned, whose sins are irremissible; but such as are in a middle state, i. e. that depart with sanctifying grace and charity, but yet guilty of some lesser sins, of which they are to be purged.

I reply, 1st, That there is not a word of all this so much as hinted in the text; and any one might from thence as reasonably conclude for either of the other kinds as they do for this middle sort. For as concerning the just, it is not certainly at all absurd to say, that their sins are then forgiven, when they are finally acquitted at God's tribunal, as they shall be in the world to come. And for the wicked, since we here are told that *blasphemy against the Holy Ghost* is the only sin that shall *not be forgiven;* nay, our Saviour expressly says, *that all other sins shall be remitted;* it may, with much more

[k] Bellarm. de Purg. l. 1. c. 5. p. 586. D. Dico, post novissimum judicium non fore purgatorium.

agreement to the text, follow, that all men, be their sins what they will, shall have grace of repentance, whereby they may be pardoned in the world to come, the blasphemers of the Holy Ghost alone excepted, than that those only shall be forgiven who die with venial sins. But,

2ndly, What have we here to do with *the remission of sins?* Purgatory is a place, not where sins are remitted, but where they are punished with the greatest severity; nay, what is still more, punished after they are remitted; nay, what is still more extraordinary, therefore punished, because they are remitted. For if the guilt were not remitted, the sinner could not go to purgatory, nor have the favour of being punished there. And therefore it is utterly impertinent, from the remission of some sins in the world to come, to conclude there is a place where all sins, even the least, are exacted, and that so rigidly, that there is no escaping thence, till either by their selves or their friends they have *paid the very uttermost farthing*[l].

In short, if we will conclude any thing as concerning the remission of sins from this, the rules both of logic and prudence will direct us to make one part of the opposition answer to the other; and then it will stand thus: The *sin against the Holy Ghost* shall never be at all forgiven, whether as to guilt or punishment, but shall be avenged to all eternity. Therefore all other sins, upon repentance, shall be forgiven, both as to the fault and punishment, so as not to be required, neither now or hereafter. Any other remission than this the scripture nowhere speaks of, nor does this text infer it. And to suppose without proof that there is any other, is in good earnest to beg the question.

The sum of all is what I before said[m]; that our blessed Saviour intended by this phrase to cut off all hopes of pardon for this sin, by telling them that it should not be remitted, neither by any expiation in this life, nor by any extraordinary grace of God in the age of the Messiah, or in the life after this; which are the only notions of *the world to come* that the Jews knew, and in both which they fancied some sins not elsewhere remissible might be forgiven.

And this may suffice to have been said to shew how far the holy scripture is from establishing this doctrine as an article

[l] Matt. v. 26. [m] See Dr. Lightfoot upon the place.

of faith; for sure, if these places which they call *demonstrative* are so little to the purpose, we can have no great expectation from the rest, which themselves esteem but only probable proofs of it.

SECT. III.

That the Primitive Church for six hundred years knew nothing of the Romish Purgatory.

BUT if the scriptures be thus silent in this matter, let us see if the Fathers of the church, in the first ages of the gospel, received the present doctrine of purgatory as an article of their belief. I shall need to insist so much the less on this here, because the greatest part of the authorities that are usually produced to this effect relate not immediately to purgatory, but to prayers for the dead; and therefore will be more proper to be considered in the next discourse. Those that speak precisely to this point are but few; and I shall take them in such order as seems most natural for our examination.

And the first I shall mention is Origen. We ought so much the rather to complain of the sophistry of our adversaries in making use of his testimony, in that either they themselves must deny that his opinion concerning purgatory was the same with theirs, or they must confess that those Fathers and councils who condemned him as an heretic on this account, have in him pronounced their sentence also. I have before observed of this Father, that he thought there were no pains but purgatory after this life; insomuch, that after a certain time, not only all men, though never so wicked, but the devils themselves, should be purified by them, and so saved in the end[o]. This Bellarmine elsewhere confesses to have been his opinion, and to this the place which he quotes out of him clearly refers: "He that is saved is saved by fire, that so if by chance he has any thing of lead mixed in him, the fire may melt and separate it, that so all may be made pure gold[p]." And is not this a rare testimony for purgatory, which neither

[o] Lib. 1. de Purg. c. 2. p. 573. C.

[p] Origen. Homil. 6. in Exod.; Qui salvus fit, per ignem salvus fit, ut siquid forte de specie plumbi habuerit admixtum, id ignis decoquat et resolvat, ut efficiantur omnes aurum purum. Bellarm. de Purg. l. 1. c. 10. p. 608. B.

they themselves approve of, and which both the ancient Fathers, Epiphanius, St. Jerome, St. Austin, nay, and even the fifth general council itself, has condemned as heretical.

And what I have now said of Origen, I must in the next place affirm of another Father, and he the first which Bellarmine produces on this occasion, viz. Gregory Nyssen, who has long since been observed, as to this matter, to have favoured the heresy of Origen. Indeed we are told by Photius, that Germanus, patriarch of Constantinople, in the seventh century, wrote an apology for him[r], in which he shews that this was not the opinion of Gregory Nyssen himself, but that his works had been corrupted by the followers of Origen, the better to countenance their error: whichsoever it were, it is the same thing as to the authority of his writings in this controversy: and indeed the very places cited by Bellarmine shew that this was the purgatory he contends for; viz. such in which all were to be purified, and at last saved for ever. He distinguishes two orders of men; of which one, by the discipline of Christ, are purged here on earth[s]; such are the patriarchs, prophets, apostles, disciples, martyrs, and as many as preferred, says he, a virtuous life before a sensual and material enjoyment: in the other he ranks "all other men whatsoever, who shall return," he says, "to that grace that was once given them[t], after that, by the future discipline," (i. e. in the world to come, after the final judgment,) "they shall have cast off in the purgatory fire their propension to matter;" for so it is in the original, and not as Bellarmine renders it, "a wiping away the spots of matter in a purgatory fire after this life."

To these two I must in the next place subjoin St. Jerome, whom, though I will not with Ruffinus[x] accuse of being in-

[r] Codex 233. p. 904. ed. G. L.

[s] Greg. Nyss. de mortuis Orat. p. 635. Τοὺς πατριάρχας τε καὶ τοὺς προφήτας, καὶ τοὺς σὺν αὐτοῖς τε καὶ μετ' ἐκείνοις δι' ἀρετῆς τε καὶ φιλοσοφίας ἀναδραμόντας ἐπὶ τὸ τέλειον. μαθητὰς λέγω, καὶ ἀποστόλους, καὶ μάρτυρας, καὶ πάντας τοὺς τὴν ἐνάρετον ζωὴν πρὸ τοῦ ὑλικοῦ τετιμηκότας βίου. 636. A. tom. 3. ed. G. L. Paris. 1638.

[t] Ibid. p. 636. Τῶν δὲ λοιπῶν διὰ της εἰς ὕστερον ἀγωγῆς ἐν τῷ καθαρσίῳ πυρὶ ἀποβαλόντων τὴν πρὸς τὴν ὕλην προσπάθειαν, καὶ πρὸς τὴν ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἀποκληρωθεῖσαν τῇ φύσει χάριν—οὐ γὰρ εἰς ἀεὶ παραμένει τῶν ἀλλοτρίων ἡ ἐπιθυμία τῇ φύσει. B. Which Bellarmine, from P. Francise. Zinus, faultily renders, Aliis autem post hanc vitam purgatorio igne materiæ labes abstergentibus. De Purg. l. 1. c. 10. p. 607.

[x] See Bellarm. de Purg. l. 2. c. 1 p. 631. A.

volved in the error of Origen, yet [y] Bellarmine himself cannot deny him to have been charged with an opinion not very much differing from it, viz. that "all catholic Christians shall in the end be saved, after they have been tried and purified in the fire." And this, the very place which they cite in favour of their purgatory plainly shews to have been his opinion [z]; "As we believe," says he, "the torments of the Devil, and of all that deny the faith, and of those wicked men who have said in their heart there is no God, to be eternal: so for those who are sinners and wicked, but yet Christians, whose works are to be tried and purged in the fire, we believe that the sentence of the Judge shall be moderate, and mixed with clemency." In which words this opinion, which the Romanists themselves confess to be erroneous, is plainly contained, viz. of the "moderate punishment of wicked men and sinners," if Christians; i. e. of their salvation after a certain time of purgation in the fire of the last judgment; (for so the opposition to the eternal punishment of the others requires us to expound it;) but for the burning of good men, whose sins are forgiven, and who depart this life in a state of charity and in the grace of God, such as are punished in the popish purgatory, of this there is no mention.

And the same is so evidently the meaning of the other passage alleged by Bellarmine [a] from this Father, that there can be no doubt of it: "If," says he, "Origen says, that all rational creatures are not to be destroyed, and allows repentance to the Devil; what is this to us, who say, that the Devil and his companions, and all wicked and prevaricating men, shall perish for ever; and that Christians, if they are overtaken in their sins, shall be saved after punishment?"

And hitherto we have considered such passages as the error of Origen, sufficiently different from the doctrine of the Romish purgatory, has given occasion to. But there was an-

[y] Ibid. 632. C.

[z] Sicut Diaboli et omnium negatorum atque impiorum, qui dixerunt in corde suo non est Deus, credimus æterna tormenta; sic peccatorum et impiorum, et tamen Christianorum, quorum opera in igne probanda sunt atque purganda, moderatam arbitramur, et mixtam clementiæ sententiam Judicis. Comm. in Is. in fin. Bellarm. l. 1. c. 10. p. 608. A.

[a] Bellarm. ib. p. 608. D. Hieron. lib. 1. contr. Pelag. ultr. med.; Si autem Origenes omnes rationabiles creaturas dicit non esse perdendas, et Diabolo tribuit pœnitentiam; quid ad nos, qui Diabolum et satellites ejus, omnesque impios et prævaricatores dicimus perire perpetuo; et Christianos, si in peccato præventi fuerint, salvandos esse post pœnas?

other opinion in the primitive church, which I have mentioned above, and to which many other expressions of the other Fathers do allude, viz. "that all those who at the last day shall appear before the judgment seat of Christ, shall be proved by a certain terrible fire, by the force of which the good and bad shall be separated, and if any evil of their past life still adheres to the good, it shall then in that purgatory fire be entirely done away."

Now to this belong those passages that are produced on this occasion from Lactantius, Hilary, St. Ambrose, Eusebius Emissenus, and some of St. Austin himself. I shall offer one proof of this in the last instance of cardinal Bellarmine[b], St. Hilary, which he thus quotes: "An unwearied fire is to be undergone by us, in which are to be endured those grievous punishments of a soul to be expiated from its sins[c]." But the whole passage is indeed this: "St. Hilary in his Annotations on the 20th verse of the cxixth Psalm, *My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thy judgments*," applies it unto the future judgment[d]; and among other observations has this passage[e]: "Seeing we must render an account for every idle word, do we desire the day of judgment, in which that unwearied fire is to be passed through? in which those grievous punishments are to be undergone for the expiating of a soul from sin? *A sword shall pass through the soul of the blessed Virgin Mary, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.* If that Virgin who bore God is to come into the severity of the judgment, will any one dare desire to be judged by God?" This certainly is such a testimony, as, had Bellarmine ever examined it, he would have been ashamed to have produced it for a proof of purgatory.

The authority of St. Cyprian[f], as it is commonly cited by them, seems more considerable; "It is one thing to be purged

[b] Bellarm. de Purg. l. 1. c. 10 p. 607. &c.

[c] Nobis est ille indefessus ignis obeundus, in quo subeunda sunt gravia illa expiandæ a peccatis animæ supplicia. Bell p. 609

[d] Hilar. in Psal. cxix. gimel. p. 865. F. 866. A. edit. Paris, 1652.

[e] An cum de omni otioso verbo rationem simus præstituri, diem judicii concupiscimus, in quo nobis est ille indefessus ignis obeundus, in quo subeunda sunt gravia illa expiandæ a peccatis animæ supplicia? B. Mariæ animam gladius pertransibit, ut revelentur multorum cordium cogitationes; si in judicii severitatem, capax illa Dei Virgo ventura est, desiderare quis audebit a Deo judicari?

[f] Cyprian. Bellarm de Purg. l. 1 c. 10. p. 608. D.

from sins by a long time of torments, and to be mended a great while by fire; another, by suffering to have purged all sins." But the truth is, this is as little to the purpose as any we have yet seen. St. Cyprian in that epistle to Antonian defends a certain new decree of his church, that had been made in favour of those who fell in times of persecution, whereby they were admitted to penance, and by which it was feared by some, lest the Christians should be rendered more slow to suffer for the faith. In this Epistle, St. Cyprian shews Antonian[g], that though the church had granted something of favour to these libellatic Christians, yet still their condition was infinitely worse than that of the martyrs, so that there was no cause to doubt but that every one ought to prefer martyrdom, notwithstanding the new favour that was allowed to them. And then entering upon the comparison, "It is one thing," says he, "to stand in expectation of pardon," (as the penitents did,) "another to be arrived at their glory," (as the martyrs were): "It is one thing, being clapped into the prison, not to go out thence till they have paid the uttermost farthing;" (i. e. not to be admitted into the church till they had passed through all the several parts of the penance inflicted on them;) "another, presently to receive the reward of their faith and courage: one thing to be cleansed by a long grief for sin, and to be purged a long time by fire; another, to have purged away all sins by suffering." All which still refers to the afflictions and troubles of the penance they were to undergo, and concerning which, all this discourse of St. Cyprian is; whereas the holy martyrs, by suffering, were already cleansed from all their sins. There is nothing more ordinary than by the phrase of *fire* to signify any kind of afflictions; and if the conjecture of the reverend editor of the Oxford Cyprian be accepted, as the authority of several manuscripts seems to render it exceeding probable, that instead of *diu igne* it ought to be *diutine;* then it will follow, that this Father spoke nothing at all of fire; but only said this: That it is infinitely better with the martyrs to be justified from all their

g Cyprian. Epist. 55. Antoniano. p. 109, 110. edit. Oxon.; Aliud est ad veniam stare, aliud ad gloriam pervenire; aliud missum in carcerem non exire inde, donec solvat novissimum quadrantem, aliud statim fidei et virtutis accipere mercedem: aliud pro peccatis longo dolore cruciatum emundari, et purgari diu igne, (f. diutine) aliud peccata omnia passione purgasse; aliud denique pendere in die judicii ad sententiam Domini; aliud statim a Domino coronari.

sins in heaven, than with the penitents be put under a long course of severe discipline for them here in the church on earth.

And this interpretation the learned Rigaltius approves[h]; and what St. Cyprian himself adds plainly shews that it cannot refer to the Romish purgatory, where, going on still with the antithesis, he adds, "It is one thing in the day of judgment to expect with anxiety the sentence of the Lord," (as these penitents were to do;) "another, to be presently crowned by the Lord, as these martyrs were." Now this could not be said of the souls in purgatory, who, if you believe them, are in no anxiety about their future sentence, but actually secure of their salvation, as soon as they shall be delivered from those severe, yet temporary pains in which they are.

For Gregory Nazianzen, both his [i] scholiast Nicetas interprets the fire he speaks of to be that of hell, and the occasion of his words, and the persons to whom he addresses, shew it can be understood of no other. The persons were the Novatians; the occasion, to exhort them, by the fear of this punishment, to return to the communion of the church[k]. Now for schismatics, if they continue obstinate in their separation, I suppose the church of Rome will allow there shall be reserved some worser fire than that of purgatory.

The next Father produced by Bellarmine is St. Basil[l], who upon Is. ix. 18, says, that "sin is therefore by the prophet compared to grass, because grass is the most fruitful among herbs[m]." And then he goes on in the words produced for purgatory[n]; "If therefore we lay open our sins by confession, we shall make this grass dry, and worthy to be devoured by the purgatory fire." Now that this purgatory fire cannot be that which the Romanists mean is evident from this, that the sin is not devoured by that, but being first devoured by confession and repentance, is here punished in this fire. We must therefore seek out some other meaning, and for that, we can take no better than what this same commentary affords us; viz. that it signifies the Holy

h See his Annot. in loc. p. 109, 110.

i Gregory Nazianz. tom. 2. Op. G. L. p. 1037. C. Paris. 1630.

k Greg. Naz. Homil. 39. t. 1. p. 636.

l St. Basil. Bell. p. 608. C.

m Ὅτι ἡ ἀγρωστις πολυγονώτατον ἐστιν ἐν βοτάναις, καὶ οὐδαμοῦ καταλήγει αὐτῆς ἡ γενεσις.

n Ἐὰν οὖν γυμνώσωμεν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν διὰ τῆς ἐξομολογήσεως ἐκοσήσαμεν αὐτὴν ξηρὰν ἀξίαν τοῦ καθαρτικοῦ πυρὸς κατα-βρωθῆναι. Basil. in ix. Is. tom. 2. p. 216. ed. G. L. Paris. 1637.

Spirit, operating upon the hearts of the penitent, and with his celestial fire consuming those sins, which by confession are dried, and made fit for that holy flame. So on the sixth of Isaiah, speaking of the altar which the prophet there saw, he says was signified by it [o], "a certain celestial altar, namely the place of the purifying of souls; from whence that purgatory fire is sent out to the sanctified powers. With this fire did the heart of Cleophas and Simon burn, when our Lord opened to them the scriptures. With this fire are they heated, who are warmed by the Holy Ghost," &c.

As for the other passage that is alleged from the same comment [p], it is so clear that by the purging, or rather the castigating fire which he there speaks of, he understands those evils and afflictions that God was about to bring upon the Israelites for their amendment, that I shall not need say any thing more to it.

For Theodoret, whom Bellarmine cites out of his comments on 1 Cor. iii, he is indeed the clearest of all to their purpose: "We believe," says he [q], "this to be the very purgatory fire in which the souls of the dead are tried and purged as gold in a crucible." But now the misfortune is, that Theodoret has no such words; nay, though they themselves are the editors of his works, yet have they never yet dared to insert this pretended explication into them. It is indeed an instance of the peculiar confidence of these men in their pretences to antiquity, not only to go on to allege Theodoret [r] for an abettor of their doctrine, after they had been publicly challenged by a Greek author [s] in his tract against purgatory concerning it; but especially, when his comments on this very place of St. Paul, which themselves have set forth, interpret the fire he there speaks of to be the fire of hell [t], and the day which is to reveal it the day of judgment.

o Ἐπουράνιόν τι θυσιαστήριον, τοῦτ' ἔστι χωρίον καθαρισμοῦ ψυχῶν, ὅθεν ἐκπέμπεται ταῖς ἁγιαζομέναις δυνάμεσι τὸ καθάρσιον πῦρ. Τοιούτῳ πυρὶ Κλεόπᾳ καὶ Σίμωνος ἐκαίετο ἡ καρδία, ὅτε διήνοιγεν αὐτοῖς ὁ Κύριος τὰς γραφάς· Τοιούτῳ θερμαίνονται πυρὶ οἱ τῷ πνεύματι ζέοντες, &c. tom. 2. cap. 6. p. 172. B.

p Vid. ibid. pag. 216. E.

q Bellarm. p. 608. C. D.

r See Bellarm. lib. 1. de Purg. c. 5. p. 501. B.

s Nilus de Purgatorio, p. 144.

t Theodoret in 1 Cor. iii. 12, 13. Τῆς γεέννης τὸ πῦρ, tom. 3. p. 134. A: and below, lit. B. ἡ γὰρ ἡμέρα δηλώσει· ἀντὶ τοῦ, ἡ τῆς κρίσεως: et lit. C. ἡμέρα τῆς ἐπιφανείας τοῦ σωτῆρος. Edit. Paris, G. L. 1642.

There are yet remaining two of the writers of the Latin church to be considered by us: the first, Tertullian, in his book *de Anima*, cap. 17; so Bellarmine alleges him, but it should have been the 35th. But this author is utterly foreign to his purpose: all he says is, that the souls of men shall be restored to their bodies, some sooner, others later, in Christ's millenary kingdom, according to what their sins or piety have deserved: that if we live wickedly, the Judge shall cast us into the "infernal prison, from whence we shall not go out, until every the least offence has been paid for by the delay of our rising[y]." And this was all that Rigaltius himself understood by it.

As for St. Austin, the last Father to be considered by us, I have already said enough to obviate whatever authorities can be brought from him. He was in the opinion of those who believed a probatory fire at the end of the world; and to this many of his expressions refer. Again, he thought that those who departed hence did not go straight to heaven; and therefore, that those whose affections[z] were very much tied to the things of this world might still retain in their separate state some desires towards them, and be troubled for the loss of them: and by this we must explain some others of his sayings. But in all these he expresses himself with so much doubt and uncertainty, as plainly shews how little he thought any of these things to be articles of faith; and whatever they were, yet are they, to be sure, all of them vastly different from the Roman purgatory.

And now, after so particular an examination of the several testimonies produced in favour of this doctrine, I think I may venture to conclude with the same that I began this section, that neither the holy scripture, nor Fathers of the first 600 years, do at all authorize the Romish purgatory. Let us see, finally, whether the reasons offered for the establishment of it will have a sufficient weight to engage us to believe it.

y "Et judex te tradat angelo executionis, et ille te in carcerem mandet infernum, unde non dimittaris nisi modico quisque delicto mora resurrectionis expenso," pag. 291. edit. Paris. 1675.

z See his Enchiridion, cap 67, 68, 69. et in Quæst. ad Dulcit. q. 1. See above, Introduction.

SECT. IV.

That the Principles of Right Reason do not engage us to the Belief of Purgatory.

AND first, thus they argue: "There are some sins in their own nature venial[a], and worthy only of a temporal punishment: but it is possible a man may depart out of this life with such only: therefore it is necessary that he may be purged in another life."

To this rope of sand, rather than argument, I reply, 1st, that the supposition it goes upon is false; 2dly, that the conclusion it infers is inconsequent. For the former of these; that some sins are less than others, it is confessed; but that any sins are properly venial, we deny. To be venial, is to be worthy of pardon, or not to deserve punishment; but whatsoever does not deserve punishment can be no sin, for all sin infers an obligation to punishment; and therefore, to be a sin, and yet be venial, is in proper terms no better than a flat contradiction. Again, the sins here spoken of are supposed to be worthy of a temporal punishment; but sins that are worthy of a temporal punishment are not properly venial; therefore, either the sins here spoken of must not deserve even a temporal punishment, or they cannot be said to be properly venial.

But, 2dly, be the sins, as they desire, venial; how does it from hence follow that it is necessary that these be punished in another life? And why is not the blood of Christ, which cleanses the greatest sins, a sufficient purgatory for the least infirmities? Venial sins are by themselves confessed to be entirely consistent with the grace of God; nay, so consistent, as not to destroy, or but even lessen it. Now for a Christian, who has lived so well as to be still in the grace and favour of God; that has received an actual pardon of all his other sins, through the merits and satisfaction of Christ, so as to be absolutely certain of a crown of glory for ever; to think that such a one, I say, shall be punished with torments, inferior in nothing but the duration to those of hell-fire itself, for such slips and infirmities as the best of men are encompassed with, and

[a] Bellarm. de Purg. l. 1. c. 11. p. 609. C.

which no man can ever hope perfectly to overcome; and this, notwithstanding all the promises of mercy and forgiveness which God has declared to us; this certainly is so far from being a dictate of right reason, that it is impossible for any one that has any reason at all, and is not exceedingly carried away with prejudice for his opinion, ever to believe it.

Again, 2dly, thus they argue: "When sinners are reconciled to God, the whole temporal pain is not always remitted with the sin[c]: now it may happen, and often does happen, that in a man's whole life he does not fully satisfy for that temporal pain; and therefore there must be a purgatory wherein to do it."

I answer, That this too proceeds upon a false supposition, that God when he forgives our sins does not also forgive the entire obligation to punishment which by our sins we stood engaged to, and which both scripture and reason contradict.

1st, That God does sometimes afflict those persons whose sins he forgives, whether to prove, or to amend, or to secure them for the future; this it is confessed we read in scripture; and that this is most reasonable cannot be denied, upon the account of those excellent ends that are to be served thereby, both to the benefit of the sinner, and to warn others, by his example, not to offend. But where is there any mention of any thing of this kind, either threatened or done in another life? What end is there to be served in this? When men go to purgatory, they are already in the grace of God, or otherwise they could not come thither; they are already forgiven their sins, and secure of their salvation. The punishments therefore of that place can serve no end, either of improving him that suffers them, or of keeping others, by his example, from offending. Add to this, that the justice of God is already entirely satisfied by the merits and sufferings of Christ: so that then these punishments can be inflicted for no other purpose than for the delight God takes in punishing. But to say that God delights in the punishment of any, much more of good men, who are his children, who love him, and whom, therefore, he both loves and intends to glorify to all eternity; this is certainly to advance a notion unworthy of God, and

[c] Bellarm. de Purg. l. 1. c. 11. p. 610 C.

contrary to all those kind and endearing ideas which the holy scriptures have given us of him; and therefore ought not, without evident proof, which is not so much as pretended to by them, to be admitted.

2dly, When we say that God forgives sin, we must understand by it one of these two things, viz. that he remits either the stain or the guilt of it. For by sin there are only these two contracted. As for the stain or pollution of sin, that is not properly forgiven, but is washed away by God's sanctifying grace, upon our repentance and reconciliation to him: and for the guilt, that is nothing else but that obligation to punishment which every man by sinning renders himself obnoxious to; so that to remit the guilt is to remit the obligation to punishment. To say, therefore, that God forgives the guilt of sin, and yet that our obligation to punishment remains, is in effect to say that God forgives the guilt which he does not forgive, which must be a contradiction.

But may not God forgive the guilt, as to the obligation it lays upon us to eternal punishment, and yet retain it as to a temporal one? No doubt he may, and had he declared that he would do so, we must have believed it. But then this would not have been properly to forgive the guilt, but to commute it, to lessen it. And since neither has he any where declared that this is all he does when he forgives sins, nor does his justice require that he should do no more; but especially, seeing wherever God speaks of the remission of sins, he does it without restriction, in the most large, comprehensive terms that can be imagined; we see no cause either to suspect his goodness or to lessen his mercy by our own arbitrary and ungrounded limitations.

But, 3dly, there is yet another argument, and it is this[d]: "The opinion that takes away purgatory is not only false but pernicious; for it makes men lazy in avoiding sinning, and in the doing of good works. Whilst he that believes that there is no purgatory, but that all sins are abolished by death to those that die in faith, saith to himself, To what purpose do I labour in fastings and prayer, in continence and almsdeeds? Why do I defraud my heart of its delights and plea-

[d] Bellarm. de Purg. l. 1. c. 11. p. 613. D.

sures, since at my death, my sins, whether few or many, shall all be done away."

——— Habeat jam Roma pudorem ;
Tertius e cœlo cecidit Cato.———

For is not this rare cant? To hear those, who have taken away the fears of hell, with a demure countenance exclaim against us as wicked, in throwing off so great an engagement to piety, as, if you will believe it, they esteem purgatory to be? But yet, since the point is brought at last to this issue, let us see the comparison.

1st, We who deny purgatory thus press the practice of good works upon our auditors: That God, to whom we are engaged by all imaginable ties of love, duty, and gratitude, expressly requires them of us, as the only means to retain his favour. That if we be zealous in his service now, we shall certainly receive an eternal weight of bliss and glory in his kingdom. But that if we be careless and negligent of our duty, nothing but everlasting torments shall remain for us. That, let us not deceive ourselves, or flatter our souls with any new ways of getting to heaven ; *without holiness no man shall* ever *see the Lord.* Repentance is the only thing that by faith can reconcile us to his favour ; and repentance cannot be true, except there be a true love of God, and an utter detestation of sin, and a hearty contrition that we have ever committed it ; and a steadfast resolution never to fall any more into it ; and this improved in an actual, sincere endeavour, what in us lies, to abound in good works, and fulfil that duty which he requires of us. That without this, it is not any power or authority of the church absolving us from our sins; any pardons or indulgences, either before or after our commission of them, that can stand us in any stead, or restore us to God's favour and the hopes of salvation. But that if we do this, then indeed we may assure ourselves of his acceptance ; we may raise our hopes to the blessings that he has promised ; and that we may be the more encouraged to pursue them, may assure ourselves that all those joys which he has prepared for us, and which it does not now enter into the heart of man even to conceive any thing of as he ought to do, are not at any great distance : as soon as ever we have finished our course here, we shall pre-

sently be translated, if not to a perfect fruition of them, yet to such an antepast, as shall be more than a sufficient reward for all our endeavours in the pursuit of them.

This is the method of our preaching: let us now set cardinal Bellarmine in the pulpit, and see how much more effectually he will press these things upon his congregation. And because I would not make the worst of the matter, we will not consider him in quality of a Jesuit, instructing the people by artifice and distinction, how to evacuate the whole morality of the gospel, by stating precisely the point, how often a man is obliged to love God? whether upon all Sundays and holydays? or only once a year? or once in five years? or but any one time in a man's whole life? or, finally, not at all, neither living nor dying? This were, it may be, to carry matters too far; we will stop within the bounds of their more common belief.

And here, first of all, as is most fitting, we must be sure to put them often in mind of the obedience they owe to the church: of the high opinions they ought always to retain of her, and of that entire submission wherewith they are to yield themselves up to her conduct. That they be sure not to fail to go to mass every Sunday and holyday; that they eat no flesh on any of the fasts of the church, unless they are otherwise dispensed with to the contrary; that once at least every year they receive the sacrament; and before they do so, that they fail not to go to confession; that they make no doubt but by the priest's absolution they are certainly forgiven their sins, whatsoever they were; that indeed it were well that they were contrite for them; but if they are not, it is all one, attrition, with the sacrament of penance, does the same thing: that this, therefore, sets them free of all danger of hell, so that be their lives what they will, there is no great fear of that; but yet, that to secure their piety, the church has thought fit to discover to them another very terrible place, called *purgatory*, whither they must go to satisfy for their sins before they can get to heaven. That, indeed, let them live how they will, hither they must come: but yet, let them not be discouraged; there are several secret ways of avoiding it, with infinitely more security than the best life in the world can give them. First, an indulgence may be had, and that

too beforehand, to secure the greatest sinner from ever coming thither. If this fail, yet they may enter themselves into some holy fraternity, as for instance, that of the scapulary, and then they certainly get out of purgatory the Saturday after they die. At least, that let the worst that can happen, a good number of masses, when they are dead, infallibly does the business. It is true, none of these things can be had without money, and therefore the poor must take heed, and have as few sins as they can to answer for; but yet, that if they watch their time, an indulgence will come at an easy rate, and the church in charity will fall her price, rather than refuse that money that will be so much to the benefit of her faithful children.

This is, I think, the difference between us: let the world now judge who it is that give the greatest encouragement to vice, the cardinal, in these easy methods of salvation, or we, by retaining the old scripture-way of repentance and a good life. But the truth is, the argument ought to have lain thus: The opinion that takes away purgatory, and leaves men that have lived well in repose at their death, cuts off all the benefit of masses, prayers for the dead, and the like; not to say anything of the dear concern of indulgences, by which our church and our clergy in great measure subsist; and therefore, though we know we have nothing to say for it, yet we are resolved we will not quit the belief of it: and this, indeed, is the honest truth; but for the rest, it is in good earnest nothing to the purpose.

SECT. V.

That the Doctrine of Purgatory is contrary to Scripture, Antiquity, and Reason.

HITHERTO we have seen how little grounds the church of Rome has to establish this doctrine as an article of faith; we will now go yet further, and shew, not only that there is no obligation upon us, either from scripture or antiquity or reason, to believe this doctrine; but that according to the principles of every one of these, we ought not to do it.

First, for scripture.

It is not a little to be considered, in opposition to this doctrine, that these sacred writings not only every where represent to us this present life as the time of trial and exercise of

sufferings and afflictions; but also encourage us on this very consideration to bear them with patience and resignation, that as soon as we die they shall all end, and we shall receive the blessed reward which God has prepared for them that bear them as they ought to do. *I look upon it*, says St. Paul, Rom. viii. 18, *that the sufferings of this present life are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed.* And again, 2 Cor. iv. 17, *For the sufferings of this present life work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.* Many other places of this kind there are, in which our present sufferings are compared with and opposed to our future reward. Now if when all these encounters are ended, there be still another and a more dreadful sort of trial to be undergone elsewhere, how could the apostle have used those kind of antitheses; and have encouraged us to a constancy in our present afflictions, from the prospect of a time, when, according to these men, there are yet greater and more severe ones to be undergone by us?

And this then may be a second observation; That the scripture always speaks of the death of good men as a blessing, an immediate rest from their labours; and therefore, sure understood nothing of those torments to which the church of Rome now condemns them. So Rev. xiv. 13. *I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from* HENCEFORTH: *Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours.* It was this assurance made the holy men of old so desirous of their dissolution, that they might find an end of all those labours and evils which they suffered here: Phil. i. 23. *I am in a strait*, says St. Paul, *betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better*, &c. Surely St. Paul never thought of purgatory when he talked thus of going to Christ; nor would he have appeared so desirous of his dissolution, had he known he should have been cast into such a fire as the Romanists suppose to be in this infernal region.

Nor can it here be reasonably said that this was the apostle's peculiar happiness; and therefore, that though he indeed was secure of going immediately to Christ, yet others were not therefore to expect the like favour; for 2 Cor. v. 1. we find him promising the very same to all Christians indifferently:

We know, says he, *that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens:* and again, ver. 6, *When we are absent from the body*, says he, *we are present with the Lord:* by all which it appears, that when good men die they go to the Lord; to Christ, to their heavenly house; and that sure is not purgatory.

To this agree those few instances we have of just men's dying in the New Testament. Lazarus in the parable was in *Abraham's bosom;* the penitent thief on the cross was promised that he should be that day with Christ in paradise: and we have good reason to believe that the same is the state of all others, not only from the passages already mentioned, and many more of the like kind that might have been offered; but also from this, that we have not in all the holy scripture the least intimation of any such place as purgatory: that there is neither precept nor example of any one, that either prayed for the delivery of their friends departed, out of these pains, or any directions left for any one hereafter so to do: now certainly it is not easy to be imagined that the holy penmen should have been so perfectly silent in this matter, had there been so great a cause for it as the delivery of their souls out of purgatory undoubtedly would have been, or had they then esteemed it so excellent and necessary a piece of Christian charity as it is now pretended to be.

And this presumption against purgatory the holy scriptures will afford us. If we look, secondly, to the holy Fathers,

We shall find them proceeding exactly upon the same principles: they thought the just, when they were departed, were presently in a state of happiness; that it was injurious to Christ, to hold that such as died in his faith were to be pitied; that Christians therefore ought not by any means to be afraid of dying[c]: "It is for him," says St. Cyprian, "to fear death, that is unwilling to go to Christ. It is for him to be unwilling to go to Christ, who doth not believe that he beginneth to reign with Christ.——Simeon said, *Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace;* proving and witnessing that the servants of God then have peace, then enjoy free and quiet rest, when, being drawn from these storms of the world, we ar-

[c] See his book, de Mortalitat. p. 157

rive at the haven of our everlasting habitation and security.—Let us therefore embrace the day that bringeth every one to his own house, which having taken us away from hence, and loosed us from the snares of this world, returneth us to paradise, and to the kingdom of heaven."

I shall leave it to any one to consider, whether this holy Father, who discoursed thus of our dying, believed any thing of these tormenting purgatory fires that now keep men in anxiety, and make the best Christians afraid to die. And the same is the language of all the rest[f]. St. Chrysostom particularly enforces the same considerations from those Psalms that were usually said at the burial of the dead. *Return to thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath been gracious unto thee.* "You see," says that holy Father, "how that death is a blessing, a rest.—God calls it a blessing, and dost thou lament? What couldst thou have done more, if thou hadst been his enemy?"

But to put this matter, as to the point of antiquity, beyond all doubt, I will remark distinctly two or three things:

1st, That several of the most ancient Fathers not only believed the souls of the faithful to be in happiness immediately upon their departure, but to be carried immediately into heaven[g]. 1. So Athenagoras, 2. St. Cyprian, 3. Origen, 4. Gregory Nazianzen, 5. Chrysostom, 6. Cyril Alexandrinus, 7. St. Hierom and others. Now, certainly they who believed that just men when they die go straight to heaven, could not have believed that they were for a long while after their death tormented in purgatory; and therefore all these, at least, must have been of an opinion different from the church of Rome in this matter.

2ndly, Another thing remarkable in some of the ancient Fathers is, that they utterly deny that the soul is capable of being purged in another world; and this is, to be sure, ex-

f Hieron. in Os. com. 3. Augustin. Epist. 28. ad Hier. tom. 2. p. 31. A. Et Tract. 49. in Joan. tom. 9. p. 124. A. Auctor. Quæst. sub Justini nomin. Quæst. 75. p. 436. D. E. Paris, 1636. Chrysost. Hom. de SS. Bernice et Prosdoce. t. 1. Frontod. p. 563. Paris, G. L. 1636.

g 1. Legat. pro Christianis. 2. Cyprian. lib. de mortal. p. 157. vid. supr. 3. Orig. contr. Cels. l. 6, 7. 4. Greg. Naz. Or. 10. tom. 1. p. 173. 3. 5. Chrysost. vid. supr. 6. Cyril. Alex. in Joan. 19, 30. lib. 12. tom. 4. ed. *G.* L. Paris, 1638. p. 1069. B. C. 7. Hier. Epist. 25. fol. 71. C. tom. 1. edit. Erasm.

pressly contrary to the present doctrine of the Romanists in this point. Thus Gregory Nazianzen speaking of the judgment after death: "It is better," says he, "to be now chastised and purged, than to be delivered over to that torment, when it shall be no longer a time of purgation but of punishment." Where we see the Father expressly opposes the time of purgation in this life to the time, not of purgation, but of punishment in the next." And St. Chrysostom, "If the soul be purged here," (i. e. from sin,) "that fire shall not hurt it when it departs hence; but the soul that goes hence in sin, that fire" (not of purgatory, but of hell) "shall receive." This was the doctrine of those times; the soul that was clear of sin, by God's pardon and forgiveness, no fire could hurt; that which was not, no fire could cleanse; but it was to remain in torments of hell for ever.

Nor may we omit to observe, thirdly, that the Fathers take no notice of purgatory in such places, as, had they believed it, they could not well have omitted it. Hence we see no mention of it in any of their creeds or councils, or catechetical discourses, in which the other articles of their faith are set down and explained. The fifth general council, which condemned Origen for his errors concerning the pains after death, never mentioned any other purgatory in opposition to that which he had heretically invented. But that which shews it yet more plainly to have been unknown to them is, that not only St. Austin, but pope Gregory himself, the great patron of this error, yet spoke of it with some doubt; not as they use to do of a point firmly believed by the church, but as a peculiar thing, in which they were not themselves very well resolved. When the Fathers disputed against Origen, they none of them mention any of the purgatory pains which the orthodox faith taught, to distinguish them from those which he erroneously had invented. When Epiphanius disputed against Aerius, concerning the reason and benefit of praying for the dead, is it to be imagined he could then have forgot the great concern of delivering the souls departed out of purgatory, had the church then believed any such thing? To all which if we finally add, that the Greek church neither at this day does, nor ever did receive this doctrine, I cannot tell what clearer evidence we can desire to shew, that this whole business of purgatory is

but an error of the Latin church, not an article of the catholic faith.

Thirdly, For reason.

I shall only offer this one reflection: Whether there can be any reason to think there should be such a place, and such punishments as purgatory, for no end or purpose in the world. They who go thither must be perfect in charity, in the grace of God, secure of their salvation; their satisfaction must have been made by Christ's blood, and so God's justice satisfied. Now when all this is already done, to what end is it that they should be tormented? Had there been any means by such a purgatory, either to fit them for heaven or to satisfy the Divine justice, there might then have been some pretence for it. But to think that God punishes men only for punishing sake; and this too his own servants, men who are in his favour, that have lived well, and upon that account are justified by him through the blood of Christ; this is such an idea of an infinite love, mercy, and goodness, as sure can never be the dictate of right reason; I think I may say, is utterly inconsistent with it.

A

DISCOURSE

OF

PRAYERS FOR THE DEAD.

WE have now passed through the former part of our undertaking, and found but little reason to be concerned for those imaginary flames which so much terrify those of the other communion. It only remains that we descend to the great argument that is most usually insisted upon by them, to prove at least the antiquity of their error, and that is from the undenied primitive custom of "praying for the dead," and concerning which, I suppose, it may be sufficient to offer these two things:

First, To give a general account what the practice of the primitive church was; from whence it will appear how little advantage the church of Rome can derive to themselves by it.

Secondly, To answer those allegations that are from hence brought by them in favour of that praying for the dead which is now practised by them in their church.

SECT. I.

Of the Practice of the Primitive Church in praying for the Dead.

NOW that I may give the clearer account of this, I must observe, 1st, that it is one thing to inquire whether we may not innocently pray for the dead; and another, whether we ought to do it. 2. That there is a great difference between praying for the dead in general, without defining what the particular intent of it is, and what advantages accrue to the dead thereby, and determining that we are to pray for the

dead upon such a certain account, as for instance, "to deliver their souls out of purgatory," and that our prayers are effectual in order thereunto.

1. As to the former of these, we do not deny but that the Fathers did begin very early to pray for the dead; and some of them were so zealous for it too, that Epiphanius (as we shall see below) made it no small part of his accusation of Aerius, that he opposed the practice of it. But yet we do not find that they pretended it was any part of a Christian's duty to do this; that the gospel has any where required it of us, or recommended it to us: in short, they did it as something which seemed to them very pious and fitting; but they tied up no man's conscience with any decisions or anathemas about it.

2. For the benefit and advantage of it, in this they were yet less agreed than in the other; insomuch that when Aerius, whom I before mentioned, earnestly demanded what good came to the dead from our prayers? Epiphanius [a] chose rather to fly off to the custom of the church, to the necessity of these prayers, to distinguish the condition of our blessed Lord from that of all other persons, and the like; than he would say expressly, how or wherein the dead were profited by them.

Many were the private opinions of those holy men as to this matter [b]. Some who believed the millenary doctrine before mentioned, that the *dead in Christ* should revive within the compass of a thousand years, some sooner, others later, according as they had lived better or worser lives on earth, flattered themselves, that by their prayers they might hasten the felicity of their friends, and accordingly prayed, *propter maturam resurrectionem* [c], for their speedy rising in Christ's kingdom.

3. Others supposed, that in the general conflagration of the world at the last day, all men should pass through the fire; that the better Christian any one had been, the less he should

[a] Epiph. Hæres. 75. l. 3. n. 3. p. 908. A. edit. anno 1682. Ibid. n. 7. p. 911. C.

[b] Tertullian. lib. 3. contr. Marc. c. 24. p. 412. Intra quam ætatem (sc. 1000. annorum) concluditur sanctorum resurrectio, pro meritis maturius vel tardius resurgentium.

[c] Tertull. de Monogam. c. 10. p. 531. A. Ambros. de Obit. Valent. t. 3. Te quæso, summe Deus, ut charissimos juvenes matura resurrectione suscites, &c.

feel of the torment of it: and these prayed for the dead, that God would have mercy on them in that day, and not suffer them to be too much singed and burnt, not in the fire of purgatory, but in the general conflagration at the end of the world.

4. Some believed that the souls of just persons departed went not straight to heaven, but were reserved in a certain place of sequester, where they earnestly expected, and continually wished for their absolute consummation with all the faithful in Christ's kingdom. And these prayed that God would give them ease, rest, and refreshment, in the bosom of Abraham, that they might be comforted with the blessed company of the holy angels, and the vision of our Saviour Christ, till the so much wished-for day of judgment should come.

5. And lastly, not to mention any more; others there were who thought that the sentence was not instantly pronounced as soon as men died, or if it were, yet not so peremptorily, but that still, till the last day, an increase of glory might be added to the *crown of righteousness* which God hath designed for the just; and some diminution made of the torments of the wicked. Now these prayed for the dead out of this hope, to render them either more happy or less miserable, to augment their glory, or to diminish their pains for ever.

And all these were the private opinions of particular men, no definitions of the faith of the church in this matter[d]: many of the holy Fathers declaring no other cause of their praying for the dead, than only to shew their hopes of them, that they still lived, and therefore ought to have some communion maintained with them; or else to distinguish all, even the greatest saints, from our blessed Saviour, and shew his infinite prerogative above them, whilst they prayed for all the rest to testify their infirmity, and only gave thanks for him to manifest his glory.

Having given this particular account of the opinions of the primitive Fathers as to this point, and to some or other of which I shall shew that all the passages produced out of them, in vindication of the doctrine of purgatory, may be ap-

[d] Epiphan. de sect. 75. p. 911.

plied; it will be no difficult matter to shew how little all this can favour the present doctrine of the Roman church in this matter.

1. The primitive Christians, it is true, prayed for the dead, but they never put it into any of their creeds, as the council of Trent has done now. Nay Epiphanius[e] himself, in the close of his book, making a distinct recapitulation of what was the catholic faith, and what the constitution of the church, places prayers for the dead among the latter[f]; and which were therefore used, because the custom of the church gave authority thereunto.

2. The prayers that are made for the dead by the church of Rome are expressly determined to this particular end[g], to help and relieve the souls that are detained in purgatory. Whereas we do not find in the primitive church any thing at all defined as to the immediate design and benefit of them; and are only sure of this, that it was not to deliver the souls out of purgatory.

Now this in general is evident, in that we find them to have prayed for the best persons, for the holy apostles, martyrs, and confessors, for the blessed Virgin herself; for those whom they supposed at the same time to be in happiness, and whom the papists themselves do not suppose to have ever touched at purgatory.

Thus we find in the Liturgies, said to be of the ancient church, that their prayers were made for all these: the author of the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy, having first described the party deceased[h] "as replenished with Divine joy, and now no more fearing any change for the worse; being publicly pronounced a happy man, and verily admitted into the society of the saints that have been from the beginning of the world;" then brings in the bishops praying for him[i], "that God would forgive him all the sins he had committed through human infirmity, and bring him into the light and land of the living, into the bosom of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob;

e See Epiph. tom. 2. l. 3. p. 1103. vol. i. n. 21.

f Ibid. n. 23. p. 1106.

g See Sess. 25. Conc. Trid. de Purg. Symb. Pii IV. &c.

h De Ecclesiast. Hierarch. cap. 7. pag. 347, 348, 350. A. B. C. 352. C.

i Πάντα μὲν ἀφεῖναι τὰ δι' ἀνθρωπίνην ἀσθένειαν ἡμαρτημένα τῷ κεκοιμημένῳ, κατατάξαι δὲ αὐτὸν ἐν φωτὶ καὶ χώρᾳ ζώντων, &c. pag. 354. A.

into the place where there is no more any pain or sorrow or sighing."

In the Liturgy said to be St. Basil's, we find them thus praying for the dead; "Be mindful, O Lord, of them which are dead, and are departed out of this life, and of the orthodox bishops[k], which from Peter and James the apostles until this day have clearly professed the right word of faith; and particularly of Ignatius, Dionysius, Julius, and the rest of the saints of worthy memory. Be mindful, O Lord, of them also, who have stood unto blood for religion, and by righteousness and holiness have fed thy holy flock."

In the Liturgy ascribed to the apostles, thus they pray, "We offer unto thee for all the saints which have pleased thee from the beginning of the world; patriarchs, prophets, just men, apostles, martyrs, confessors, bishops, priests, deacons:" surely, I hope not to deliver all these out of purgatory.

In the Liturgy[l] of the church of Egypt, ascribed to St. Basil, Gregory Nazianzen, and Cyril of Alexandria, it stands thus: "Be mindful, O Lord, of thy saints; vouchsafe to remember all thy saints which have pleased thee from the beginning; our holy Fathers the patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, confessors, preachers, evangelists, and all the souls of the just which have died in the faith; especially the holy, glorious, the evermore Virgin MARY, mother of God; and St. John the forerunner the baptist and martyr; St. Stephen the first deacon and martyr; St. Mark the apostle, evangelist, and martyr," &c.

In the Liturgy of the church of Constantinople, said to be St. Chrysostom's[m], we find the very same: "We offer unto thee this reasonable service for those who are at REST in the faith; our forefathers, fathers, patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, preachers, evangelists, martyrs, confessors, religious persons, and for every spirit perfected in the faith; especially for our most holy, immaculate, and most blessed Lady, the mother of God, the ever Virgin MARY."

I suppose I need no other evidence than these public records of the very prayers of the primitive church, to shew that

[k] See all these collected by archbishop Usher; Answer to a Challenge; Ch. of Prayers for the Dead, p. 185, &c. edit. 1625. Constitut. Apost. lib. 8. cap. 12.

[l] Liturg. Egyptiac ex Arabic. Convers. Usher. ib. p. 186.

[m] Chrysost. Liturg. edit. Goar. in Euchol. p. 78. Paris, 1647.

they did not pray for the dead, with any intent to the bringing them out of purgatory; and by consequence, that there can be no manner of proof derived from what those holy men did, to justify what the church of Rome now does. Were it at all needful to enforce this from the testimonies of private writers, I could easily run them out into a greater length than I am willing to do. St. Cyprian[n] prayed for Laurentinus and Ignatius, whom he in the same place acknowledges to have received palms and crowns for their sufferings. St. Ambrose[o] prayed for the religious emperors Valentinian and Gratian; for Theodosius[p]; for his brother Satyrus; all which, at the same time, he declares he thought to be in happiness. Gregory Nazianzen did the like for his brother Cæsarius; and all these and many other proofs might at large be produced, were it needful to insist.

But this will more properly be done in the next point; wherein I am to examine the proofs offered by those of the Roman church in favour of their own present practice, from the custom of the primitive Fathers which we have hitherto been speaking of.

SECT. II.

The Allegations brought by those of the Church of Rome, to justify their practice of praying for the Dead, examined; and their weakness demonstrated.

BEFORE I enter on this debate, it may not be amiss to premise what the true state of the point in controversy is; viz. not whether the primitive Fathers did not pray for the dead, after the manner we have now seen, for that we have already confessed they did; but whether they prayed for the dead upon the same principles that the church of Rome does now, as supposing them to be in a state of torment, undergoing the temporal pains due to their sins, and in which therefore they were charitably to be relieved by the prayers and suffrages of the living. This is that which our adversaries are to prove to us; and I will now inquire what one of the latest of them, in his collections upon this point[r], has offered to this purpose.

[n] Cypr. Epist. 39. pag. 77. ed. Oxon.
[o] De Obitu Valentin. Imper.
[p] Id. de Obit. Theodos. Imper.
[q] Id. de Obit. Fratris Greg. Naz. in Funer. Cæsarii, Or. 10.
[r] Nubes Testium of Aerius. pag. 84.

And here, 1st, I cannot but observe his loose proposing of the point in debate[s], and the short account he gives of the case of Acrius in this matter, whom he sets at the head of his inquiry. "In the first century," says he, "about the year of Christ 50, Aerius went out of the church, and teaching many erroneous doctrines, related by St. Epiphanius, Hær. 75, endeavoured to draw numbers after him. His principal tenets were those wherein he condemned prayers for the dead," &c. And a little below, Aerius[t] condemned praying for the dead: "the Fathers practised it, and owned it as advantageous to the souls departed."

That the Fathers practised praying for the dead, and that many of them believed it advantageous to them, we have before freely allowed: and that Aerius was to be condemned for what he did in opposition hereunto we shall hereafter shew: in the meantime this gentleman ought to have known, that this is neither what they affirm nor we deny: if he will state the question as he ought, it must be as we have before done it. "Aerius condemned praying for the dead to deliver them out of purgatory; the Fathers practised it, and owned it as advantageous in order to this end:" but this neither did Aerius condemn, nor the Fathers practise; and therefore the state of this question alone, had it been sincere, would have confuted his whole chapter.

To give then such an account of Aerius[u] as may let us distinctly see what his error was, and how little chargeable we are with it, however it has pleased the writers of the Roman church, not without some ignorance, as well as much uncharitableness, to impute it to us; I must first observe a small mistake in our author as to the point of his chronology, whereby he is pleased to place Aerius[x] in the first century, about the year of Christ 50. I shall not need to say that there must be something of an error in this, because his own friend Natalis[y], out of whom he has transcribed every article of this chapter, will assure him that he was contemporary with Epiphanius, and living at the time that that Father wrote:

[s] Nubes Testium, p. 84.

[t] Ibid.

[u] Bell. de Purg. l. 1. c. 2. D. p. 571. Petavius in Epiphan. pag. 328. n. 3. Natal. Alex. Disp. 41. sec. 4. pag. 346. part. 3.

[x] Page 84.

[y] Natalis Alex. Hist. 4. sec. par. 1. pag. 263. Paris, 1679.

so that unless we suppose him to have been almost four hundred years old, we must conclude that this gentleman has placed him near three hundred years before his time. But this only by the way: as for the error itself with which Epiphanius [z] charges him, it is this; "that he opposed the mentioning the names of the dead, asking to what purpose they did it? He that is alive prayeth, or offereth the sacrifice; what shall this advantage the dead? But if the dead are indeed profited thereby, then let no man from henceforth trouble himself to live well; only let him oblige his friends, or give money to persons to pray for him, that none of those inexpiable sins he hath committed may be required of him." This was the case of Aerius: and had the church indeed universally believed, as some of the Fathers did, that the judgment after death was suspended till the general resurrection, and that in the mean time the sins of the dead might be expiated by the prayers of the living, he had but justly enough opposed so dangerous an error. But this was not the common opinion of the church, nor her design in those prayers; which, as the author of the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy [a] tells us, were made only for good men; either for such as had committed no notorious faults, or had repented of them, and so died in an assured hope of God's favour and acceptance. And therefore Epiphanius [b], in answer to this objection, gives other reasons why they prayed for the dead; viz. to declare their faith and hope concerning them; to distinguish the infinite prerogative of our Saviour Christ above all, even the chiefest of his saints, by praying for these, but giving thanks only for him; and then for the benefit these prayers did the dead, he tells him, that though they were not of force to cut off all sins, which was the foundation of his objection, yet they were profitable to them, to implore the mercy of God for those who had been sinners, but repented; and to obtain for them a recompense for all in the resurrection of the just.

The prayers therefore of the church, for the rejecting of which Epiphanius here justly reproves Aerius, were not such as the church of Rome now useth; it being not imaginable,

z Epiphan. Hær. 75. pag. 908. B.

a Dionys. Eccles. Hierarch. cap. 7. καὶ γὰρ οὐδὲ τοῦτο κοινόν ἐστι τοῖς ἱεροῖς τε καὶ ἀνιέροις. pag. 347.

b Epiphan. ibid. n. 7. p. 911.

had the church then known any thing of praying of souls out of purgatory, that either Aerius could have asked the question, "To what purpose are these prayers?" or Epiphanius being asked, not presently have replied, "To deliver the souls departed from the flames of purgatory." The prayers that Aerius condemned were those which the primitive Fathers made upon the account that from Epiphanius I have just now given: and which those of the church of Rome do no less condemn than he did; whilst they so often tell us, "that if there be no purgatory, prayers for the dead must be unprofitable;" so says Aquinas[c]: "that the manner of praying for the apostles, martyrs, &c. is by disuse deservedly abolished;" so Mendoza[d]: "Nay, that to offer sacrifices for those that are in bliss is plainly absurd and impious;" so says Azorius[e]; who in this certainly outruns Aerius himself, who only pretended that it was unprofitable, but never durst say it was impious and absurd.

It is therefore very improper in our collector of the primitive Fathers to insinuate as if we were Aerians upon the account of our not praying with them for the dead. Aerius rejected the prayers that the primitive church made, upon those principles that we have said, and which the Romanists themselves reject and condemn with him: we reject those prayers which the church of Rome makes now for delivering souls out of purgatory. Had we lived in those times that Aerius did, we had readily complied with the practice of those holy men, upon such grounds as they used it: had those holy Fathers lived now in the dregs of the church, and seen the abuse of the Romanists in this matter, I make no doubt but they would have censured both the cause and the practice of the present praying for the dead, as false and unfitting; I am sure Epiphanius[f] elsewhere gives us sufficient reason to believe that he would; where speaking concerning the state after death, he tells us, "that in the age to come, after the death of a man, there is no advantage of fasting, no call to repentance, no demonstration of charity;—there

[c] Con. Gent. lib. 4. c. 91.
[d] Controvers. Theol. qu. 6. Schol. sect. 7.
[e] Azorius Instit. Moral. tom. i. l. 8. c. 20. See these cited by Abp. Usher, Answer to a Chall. pag. 244, 245.
[f] Epiphan. Hær. 59. pag. 501. D. 502. A. B. C.

Lazarus does not go to the rich man, nor the rich man to Lazarus; neither Abraham sends the poor man to labour that he may grow rich, nor does the rich man obtain, though with prayers entreating merciful Abraham. Then, the garners are sealed, the time is ended, the combat finished, the lists are empty, and the crowns distributed. Those that have not yet encountered have no more opportunity; and they who have been overcome in the lists are cast out. In short, all is perfectly ended, when once we are departed hence."

And now having thus prepared the way to the following inquiry, let us see whether his Fathers will prove any better advocates for their cause, than this loose and imperfect state of the question between us seems to promise. And,

1st, I must take notice, that the greatest part of those he has here cited, say only in general, that they were wont to pray for the dead, that God would forgive them their sins, and instate them in the light and land of the living; or something of the like kind. Now it is evident, from what has been before observed, that all these argue nothing more than what we have already confessed to have been the practice of the primitive church, but gives not the least authority to those prayers which are made in the church of Rome, to deliver the souls departed out of purgatory.

So Dionys. Areopag.[g]: "The venerable prelate coming prays over the dead body, he implores the Divine clemency to pardon all the sins committed by the deceased party, through human frailty, and that he may be received into the state of bliss and region of the living."

This is indeed the sense of what the pretended Dionysius says[h], though not his words: but then I must observe, 1st, that this prayer is made over those who "having lived holy lives, are now come to the end of their combats, and therefore rest in joy, and in a certain hope, and are already received into those most holy seats, to which all those in time shall be promoted, who are here endued with a Divine perfection[i]." So that it must be an intolerable presumption to pretend that this prayer was designed to deliver the deceased out of a place

[g] Nubes Test. p. 85. Natalis Alex. sec. 4. tom. 3. p. 392. Dionys. Hierarch. Eccl. p. 354. A.

[h] Dionys. ibid. p. 348. C.

[i] Ibid. p. 352. C.

of torments, nothing inferior to those of hell fire, such as we are told purgatory is.

2dly, The author inquiring to what purpose these prayers were made, answers[k], "That the holy bishop, knowing the promises of God to those who had lived well, now prayed that those sins which by human frailty had been committed by the person deceased, being forgiven, the rewards promised to the just might be accomplished in him." Here then is a plain account of the design of their praying, but no way favourable to the business of purgatory.

3dly, Pachymeres in his Paraphrase, explaining what the meaning of those hymns and lessons was, which were read at the funeral of such a one for whom they thus prayed, says, "It is to signify those eternal mansions to which the party deceased is gone, and to exhort the living to strive after the like holy end[l]." Now surely these eternal mansions of the blessed were not the Roman purgatory; and it would have been but an uncomfortable exhortation, to have proposed to the living, that they should use their utmost endeavours that they might come into this place of torments.

4thly, In his account of the prayers themselves, he says, "That the bishop knows from the holy scriptures, that by the just judgment of God, a blessed and divine life is prepared for the just, the Divine goodness mercifully overlooking the spots which by human frailty we contract, and from which no man is free. And therefore knowing this, he prays that whatever spots of this kind he by his frailty may have contracted, that God would mercifully overlook them, and give him his sacred reward[m]." And the same was the language of the ancient liturgies of the church, which we have before cited; in which, having named the holy apostles, martyrs, and confessors, which even the Romanists themselves will not send to purgatory, they pray that they may "rest in the country of the living," in the "delights of paradise," in "God's kingdom," in the "bosom of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob;" as St. James's Liturgy has it in the very words of Dionysius[n]: "Make them

k Dionys. Hierarch. Eccl. p. 356, 357.
l Ibid. p. 366. D.
m Ibid. p. 370.
n Ἐκεῖ αὐτοὺς ἀναπαυσον, ἐν χώρᾳ ζώντων, ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ σοῦ, ἐν τῇ τρυφῇ τοῦ παραδείσου, ἐν τοῖς κόλποις Ἀβραὰμ, Ἰσαὰκ, καὶ Ἰακὼβ. Liturg. Jacob. Bibl. Patr.

rest in the tabernacles of thy saints," says St. Mark[o]; in the "light of thy countenance," says St. Basil and St. Chrysostom[p]; "give them rest," says St. Cyril[q]. Now if these prayers for this rest were to this end, that God would deliver them out of purgatory, and set them at ease, as the church of Rome pretends, then certainly the holy apostles and the blessed Virgin must have been in a very ill condition, who after 400 years (for so late some of these prayers must be confessed to have been) were still esteemed by the church to lie in those purgatory flames; and it was great uncharitableness in St. Peter and his successors, that they would not all this while open the treasure of the church, and by some powerful indulgence set them at liberty. Conclude we therefore, that there is no manner of consequence in this argument: The primitive Fathers prayed for the rest of the souls departed; therefore they thought them in torment in a purgatory fire, suffering the temporal punishment due to their sins, and by these prayers believed they could deliver them from thence.

And yet is this the most that the greatest part of the testimonies which are offered to us say; and by consequence are, as we see, wholly impertinent to the purpose of the church of Rome: I shall need only name them, since the same answer I have given to this first will, by application, serve for all the rest.

So Tertullian, whose words our collector[r] thus renders; "We make oblations for the dead, and keep the anniversary of their birth[s]."——He is speaking in that chapter of several customs of the church, which tradition and long usage had established, but for which there was no authority of holy scripture; and this he gives as one instance. But were these oblations to deliver them out of purgatory? I shall only desire him to consider the interpretation which their own editor gives of the *natalitia*, which he renders *anniversaries*, and then affirm it if he can. By the *natalitia*, says he, "is meant the solemnities used to be kept in honour of the martyrs every

o Τὰς ψυχὰς ἀνάπαυσον ταῖς τῶν ἁγίων σοῦ σκηναῖς. Lit. Marc.

p Ἀνάπαυσον αὐτοὺς ὅπου ἐπισκοπεῖ τὸ φῶς τοῦ προσώπου σου. Lit. Basil. et Chrys.

q "Da illis requiem," Cyril. Hieros. Liturg.

r Natalis Alex. diss. 41. tertii sæc. p. 394. Nubes Test p. 85.

s "Oblationes pro defunctis, pro natalitiis annua die facimus." De Corona, c. 3. p. 102. A.

year, on the day when by dying to the world they were born to heaven[r]." It seems then these solemnities Tertullian here speaks of, were for those who were already born to heaven, for the holy martyrs; and not, as is pretended, to deliver their souls out of purgatory.

Nor does Arnobius[u] add any thing more: "What reason was there that our churches should be so outragiously thrown down, in which prayers were offered to our sovereign God, peace and mercy was implored for all, for magistrates, armies, kings, friends and enemies, whether alive or dead. Here is mention of praying for the dead; but as for purgatory, οὐδὲ γρύ.

What Eusebius[x] speaks concerning the death of Constantine is no way more pertinent. He tells us that "they offered up prayers to God for the soul of the emperor;" but that these prayers were to deliver his soul from the temporal pains of purgatory, he says not one word.

I have already considered Epiphanius, and we find in his reprehension of Aerius much against them, but nothing in their favour: as for what Theodoret[y] relates of Theodosius the younger, that he prayed for his father and mother, "begging that they might obtain pardon for all their sins of frailty;" it still confirms that they did in those days pray for the dead, and for the forgiveness of their sins; but for the remission of any present temporal punishment, which they thought they were undergoing for them, this we do not find that they prayed for.

For St. Ambrose[z], had his whole words been transcribed, we should have seen at first view that they were nothing to the purpose. He exhorts Faustinus, "not so much to bewail his sister, as to pray for her." What! to deliver her soul out of purgatory? No surely, for in the words immediately foregoing he tells him, "that being taken for a time from us, she doth pass a better life there[a]." But this little oversight,

[r] Le Prieur. Annot. in loc. p. 102.

[u] Natalis Alex. p. 395. Nubs. Test. p. 86. "Cur immaniter conventicula diruti (meruerunt) in quibus summus orator Deus, pax cunctis et venia postulatur, magistratibus, exercitibus, regibus, familiaribus, inimicis, adhuc vitam degentibus, et resolutis corporum vinculone," lib. 4.

[x] Natalis Alex. ibid. p. 398. Nubes Test. p. 88.

[y] Natalis Alex. p. 401. Nubes Test. p. 92.

[z] Natalis Alex. p. 402. Nubes Test. p. 93.

[a] "Hæc ad tempus quidem erepta nobis meliorem illic vitam exigit." Epist. 8.

ought not in justice to be imputed to our Collector: who transcribes Natalis, and not the Fathers themselves; and could therefore give us no more than what he found in him.

The next from whom he supposes may be inferred the doctrine of praying souls out of purgatory is St. Jerome[b]; who in the epistle mentioned to Pammachius some time after the death of his wife Paulina[c], particularly commends him that he had sold all his goods and given them to the poor, and taken up the resolution of leading a monastic life. "Other husbands," says he, "dress their wives' tombs with violets, roses, and purple flowers, and by these services ease their disturbed mind: but our friend Pammachius pays no other duty to the holy ashes and venerable bones but by giving alms, cherishing them by this sweet odour, because he knows it is written, *As water extinguishes the fire, so do alms blot out sin.*" This is in some measure St. Jerome's sense, but by no means suitable to the elegance of his expressions: but not to insist on that, was this charity to deliver her soul out of purgatory? Nay, but St. Hierom[d] in the close of that very epistle says, that she was with her sister Blœsilla "already with the Lord:" that they both enjoyed a "sweet and pleasant sleep:" and in the very words cited, there are so many expressions of her present quiet, as can never be reconciled to the purgatory torments. But this the translator left out: "Cherishing them," says he, "by this sweet odour:" St. Hierom's words are these: "With these figments and these odours he cherishes her dead ashes NOW AT REST:" which plainly enough shews that he thought her in a state and place vastly different from the condition of souls in purgatory. All that St. Hierom then meant by this was only thus much: that this charity of Pammachius was most pleasing to Paulina; that her soul rejoiced in it, as in a fragrant and delightful odour; and that hereby he should engage the mercy of God, not for himself alone, but for his wife too, in whose name he did it, and to whose salvation it should therefore not a little conduce.

As to what is alleged of St. Austin's praying for his mother Monica[e], nothing certainly could have been more inauspicious

[b] Natalis Alex. p. 402. Nubes Test. p. 93.
[c] Vid. Arg. Eras. p. 73. tom. 1.
[d] Fol. 76. edit. Eras. tom. 1.
[e] Natalis Alex. p. 402. Nubes Test. p. 94.

to the consequence that is pretended to be drawn from it; for besides that in all which he says, there is not one word of any temporal pains which he desired she might be freed from; he expressly declares, "that he believed God had already done all that he desired[f]." If therefore he desired to have her delivered out of purgatory, he believed God had already done it, and therefore the prayers he now made could not be to obtain her freedom. But this circumstance our author cautiously omitted, though in the middle of what he set down; and that the charge of such false dealing may not always lie upon Natalis, I must here free him from it; this being the only passage in the whole chapter which our Collector has not borrowed from him; and must therefore now bear the blame himself, unless he has some other friend that I do not at present know of, upon whom to lay the imputation.

I shall not need to give any answer more to the other passage or two from the same Father; in none of which is there the least mention of any purgatory pains, or that the prayers were made for their deliverance from them.

And hitherto then we have considered such testimonies as cannot, with any show of reason, be pretended to make any thing for the custom of praying for the dead, now used in the church of Rome. But now,

2ndly, Some others there are that may seem more immediately to their purpose; in which they expressly desire rest, comfort, and refreshment for the dead. I have already answered in great measure this argument, by shewing that these things they prayed for, even for the apostles and martyrs, and the blessed Virgin herself; and therefore that these expressions cannot be said to signify, that the persons for whom they prayed were either in purgatory or any other place of torments. But I will now more expressly remove this difficulty; and to that end I must repeat what I have before observed, that many among the ancient Fathers supposed that the souls departed do not go straight to heaven, but are kept in a place of sequester, where they earnestly desire the accomplishment of the number of Christ's saints, that they may be consummated with them in glory. Now with reference to this opin-

[f] Et credo jam feceris quod te rogo. St. August. Confession. l. 9. c. 13. tom. 1. p. 61. B. sed voluntaria oris mei approba Domine.

ion it was, that they prayed to God to give them rest: so Tertullian and St. Ambrose, alleged by our Collectors[g]; "to grant them repose, a quiet sleep:" so St. Cyprian, i. e. as Tertullian himself explains it[h]; "that they might have comfort in the bosom of Abraham, till the time of the resurrection shall come."

If it shall be objected against this, that to pray for their rest implies as if they were not now in ease, and so reduce us to a necessity of confessing either a purgatory or some other the like place of punishment; I answer, 1st, if this be so, then the blessed Virgin, the apostles, martyrs, and confessors, were all at this time in purgatory, above 300 years after their death; for thus we see they prayed in the primitive church by name for them; which yet the church of Rome dares not say. But, 2dly, in the continuance of their prayers for the dead, they used the same supplications that they did at their first departure; and therefore pray for their rest and repose, as if they were but now just about to enter into it; and this account cardinal Bellarmine himself gives us of it. To which let me add, 3dly, that the ancient Fathers thought, that in this place of refreshment there were divers degrees of it; and therefore they prayed that God would give them rest, not as if they were now totally destitute of it, but as desiring it might be increased to them in a yet higher degree: or else, 4thly, as Tertullian's words seem to imply, they desired hereby their rest, i. e. the continuance of that rest they now enjoyed, to the day of judgment.

Nor is it any prejudice to this, that the dead were now out of a capacity of having their state ever altered, and therefore that it was in vain to pray for that happiness which they were already secure of, since, as Bellarmine himself confesses[k], the ancients thought it no way improper to pray for those things which they knew God was resolved to give: and we see our blessed Saviour, in his own short prayer, has commanded us to pray that God's *kingdom may come*, which, whether we pray or no, will in its due time most infallibly be accomplished.

Whether these reasons may, any or all of them, appear to

[g] Nub. Test. vid. supr.
[h] Lib. de An. c. 35. Id. lib. 4. contr. Marc. c. 34.
[i] Lib. 2. de Purg. cap. 5. p. 644. C.
[k] Lib. 2. de Purg. cap. 5. ibid.

be a sufficient vindication of such kind of prayers, I cannot tell; but this is certain, that the primitive Christians did pray for the rest of those whom they esteemed already in happiness, and by consequence, that these prayers do not argue a state of torments, from whence the dead were to be delivered by them. And because it may be of great moment to be well assured of this, I will subjoin an undeniable instance of it, in one of the very particulars offered by our Collector, but with what sincerity, I shall leave the reader to judge, in favour of purgatory.

St. Ambrose, in his oration on the death of Theodosius, thus prays for him: "Give perfect rest to thy servant Theodosius, that rest which thou hast prepared for thy saints. Let his soul ascend thither from whence it had its origin; where it may be out of the power of death, where it may know that death is not an end of nature, but of sin. I loved him, and therefore I pursue him to the region of the living, nor will I leave him, till by my tears and prayers I bring him whither his merits call him, into the holy mount of our Lord, where there is life without end."

Thus our Collector tells us St. Ambrose prayed for Theodosius; but did this holy bishop think him as yet in purgatory, and that by his prayers he should set him at rest from the torments of it? Let us judge by what goes before in the same oration: "Theodosius, of honourable memory, being freed from doubtful fight, doth now enjoy everlasting light, and continual tranquillity; and for the things which he did in this body, he rejoiceth in the fruits of God's reward; because he loved the Lord his God, he hath merited the society of the saints[l]." And again, in the same oration: "He hath not laid down, but changed his kingdom, being taken by the right of his piety into the tabernacles of Christ, into the heavenly Jerusalem[m]." Now surely the tabernacles of Christ, the Jerusalem that is above, are no characters of purgatory; and yet here St. Ambrose thought Theodosius at the same time that he prayed for him. But St. Ambrose is yet more express: "[n]Theodosius

[l] Absolutus igitur dubio certamine, fruitur nunc augustæ memoriæ Theodosius luce perpetua, tranquillitate diuturna, et pro iis quæ in hoc gessit corpore, munerationis Divinæ fructibus gloriatur. Ergo quia dilexit augustæ memoriæ Theodosius Dominum Deum suum, meruit sanctorum consortia.

[m] Regnum non deposuit sed mutavit; in tabernacula Christi jure pietatis ascitus, in illam Hierusalem supernam.

[n] Manet ergo in lumine Theodosius, et sanctorum cœtibus gloriatur.

therefore," says he, "remains in light, and glorieth in the company of the saints." Let the reader now judge whether the prayers of this holy man for the rest of Theodosius be any precedent for those prayers that are made for the rest of souls by the church of Rome.

3. There is yet one witness to be considered, and upon which our Collector insists more largely than ordinary, and that is St. Chrysostom[o]: who, in the places cited out of him, speaks indeed of certain benefits which came to the dead by our prayers; and thereupon exhorts all persons to perform this office to them. I have before mentioned an opinion of some Fathers, that even the damned in hell might be advantaged by the prayers of the living; and if not be freed from, yet be at least alleviated in their torments. And in this excessive charity St. Chrysostom was one of the forwardest; as is evident in the very homilies[p] cited by this Collector, were I at liberty to insist on a thing so well known. We are not therefore to wonder if we find this Father so earnestly pressing this charity of praying for the dead, which he thought of so great a force as even to relieve the greatest sinners. If this be either the belief or practice of the Roman church, we shall not deny them a pattern in this holy Father: but if this be what they neither believe nor allow of, how impertinent must it be to produce his praying for the dead on such principles as they condemn, to be a witness of the antiquity of their praying for the dead to deliver them out of purgatory, which he knew nothing at all of, nor did at all intend by his prayers!

4. As for what is finally added concerning the Greek church, it is confessed that they do pray for the dead upon the same grounds, and after the same manner that the ancient church did; but that they pray for them as the Romanists would now insinuate, this is false, as we have before shewn; nor do the testimonies produced at all convince us of it.

And this may suffice to have been said to the several proofs that are offered by those of the Roman communion in favour of this error concerning prayers for the dead; for as for Isidore Hispalensis, he is beyond the period I have fixed to

[o] Nub. Test. p. 88, 89, &c.
[p] Hom. 21. in Act. tom. 3. in N. T. p. 202, 203. Hom. 3. in Ep. Phil. tom. 6. in N. T. p. 32, 33.

my reflections; and for St. Perpetua's dream, which the Misrepresenter, from Natalis too, heretofore insisted upon, I may reasonably presume by our Collector's omission of it, that he thought it sufficiently answered by the learned author that first undertook the examination of his pretences against us.

CLOSE.

And now, after so particular examination of all these things, there is but one objection more remaining that I can foresee may possibly be made against us on this occasion: for be it that we have reason to throw off the Romish error of purgatory, and by consequence those prayers for the dead which are made in that church to deliver the souls from thence; yet since we cannot deny but that the primitive Christians did pray for the dead for many other ends, and which we do not presume to condemn them for, wherefore at least do we not continue the ancient practice, and pray for them as those holy men of old did?

This perhaps may be a scruple that some may raise, and having answered it I shall conclude: and,

1st, If he be one of the Roman communion that makes this objection, he may please to tell us wherefore it is that they of his own church do not do this? or why he should require us to follow the ancient practice of the church in those things which themselves do not think sufficient to oblige them to a conformity? They may call us Aerians, or what else they please, upon this account; but if to follow the error of Aerius in this be to become properly Aerians, we have before seen that they do so; nay, they outstrip him in it; whilst that sort of praying for the dead which the ancients used, he thought only needless and irrational[q]; but there are amongst them those who doubt not to call it impious and absurd.

I have before shewn what the grounds were on which those holy men prayed for the dead: now there is not one of these which is not at this day disclaimed by the church of Rome no less than by us, and especially that which was the chiefest foundation of all, viz. the opinion of the state of the soul out

[q] See above.

of heaven during its separation, they have in the council of Florence flatly condemned. Now if it be then no crime in them to reject the opinions of those primitive Christians, on which this practice was founded, nay, to censure the very practice itself upon any other account but that which they now assert, and which the ancient Fathers, as we have seen, never knew; how comes it to be more unlawful in us to do this, than it is in them? or why may not we as well give off praying for the dead as the ancient church did, as they themselves not only leave it off, but even censure it to have been impious and absurd, which we never presumed to do? But,

2dly, If the person who makes this objection be of some other communion, I have several reflections to offer in our justification in this matter.

1st, Let his reverence for antiquity be never so great, yet he will not, I am sure, say either that those holy men were infallible in every thing they did, or that we ought to receive at all adventures whatever can be proved to have descended from them. We do indeed confess, that this custom of praying for the dead was one of the most early practices of the church.

But then we have seen what it was that introduced it: and their grounds are many of them such as are now generally disclaimed by almost all Christians: such as that of Christ's millenary kingdom; of the passing of all men through the purgatory fire at the end of the world; of the souls of the just being in a place of sequester out of heaven till the last day, and the like: the rest so inconsiderable, as that we cannot by any means think them sufficient to warrant so dangerous a practice. For what is it to engage us to this, that the ancients thought hereby to "distinguish the best of men from our Saviour Christ?" to testify their hopes of a future resurrection? to maintain a kind of fellowship and communion with them? There are other ways enough to do all this, without engaging in such a piety as the holy scripture is not so much as pretended to countenance; the most that ever the holy Fathers offered for it being the custom of the church; and Tertullian expressly places it among those things which are nowhere written. How far such an authority might then have obliged us to compliance with the

practice of the church, had we lived in those primitive times, it is not necessary to inquire; but since neither the holy scripture requires it, nor does the custom of the church now exact it of us, nor do we acknowledge those opinions on which it was heretofore used, nor can we see any benefit that we are able to do the dead by them; it is but reasonable to omit that which might justly give offence to some, but cannot possibly bring advantage to any.

But, 2dly, we have yet a more particular reason why it is by no means fitting at this time thus to pray for the dead; and that is, to prevent that danger which the present practice of the church of Rome would be apt to expose men to, should we do it. To pray for the souls departed, as that church does, neither did the primitive Fathers ever allow, and we have sufficiently shewn how dangerously erroneous it is to do so. It is therefore by no means convenient to continue a practice, whereby it might be very easy to lead men into such gross mistakes; and however some might still be able to make the distinction, and see a great difference in the design and intention of the same kind of praying; yet the ill use that is made, even of what those holy Fathers did, sufficiently shews us how apt men are to confound those things together that have so nigh a relation, as to the practice and the act being the same, to lead them to believe that the principle is so too.

In short, 3dly, we cannot imagine, if there were indeed any such great piety in this practice, as to deserve our apology for the omission of it, how it comes to pass that neither precept nor example of any such thing is to be found in the holy scriptures: and to those who make that the rule of their religion, we do not see that any more need be said than this, that we find nothing there to authorize such a devotion, and that therefore we cannot think it fitting to make it a part of the church's service.

I shall close up all with the words of our church in her homily upon this subject[1]: "Let these and such other considerations be sufficient to take away the gross error of purgatory out of our heads; neither let us dream any more that the souls of the dead are any thing at all holpen by our prayers: but as the scripture teacheth us, let us think that the soul of

[1] Third part of Sermon concerning Prayer, p. 212. ed. Oxon. 1683.

man passing out of the body, goeth straightways either to heaven or else to hell; whereof the one needeth no prayer, the other is without redemption. The only purgatory wherein we must trust to be saved, is the death and blood of Christ, which if we apprehend with a true and steadfast faith, it purgeth and cleanseth us from all our sins, even as well as if he were now hanging upon the cross. *The blood of Christ*, saith St. John[s], *hath cleansed us from all sin. The blood of Christ*, saith St. Paul, *hath purged our consciences from dead works to serve the living God.* Also in another place, he saith[t], *We be sanctified and made holy by the offering up of the body of Jesus Christ done once for all.* Yea, he addeth more, saying, *With the one oblation of his blessed body and precious blood, he hath made perfect for ever and ever all them that are sanctified.* This then is that purgatory wherein all Christian men put their whole trust and confidence; nothing doubting but if they truly repent them of their sins, and die in perfect faith, that then they shall forthwith pass from death to life. If this kind of purgation will not serve them, let them never hope to be released by other men's prayers, though they should continue therein unto the world's end. He that cannot be saved by faith in Christ's blood, how shall he look to be delivered by man's intercessions? Hath God more respect to man on earth than he hath to Christ in heaven? *If any man sin*, saith St. John, *we have an advocate with the Father, even Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins*[u]. But we must take heed that we call upon this Advocate while we have space given us in this life, lest when we are once dead there be no hope of salvation left unto us. For as every man sleepeth with his own cause, so every man shall rise again with his own cause. And look in what state he dieth, in the same state he shall also be judged, whether it be to salvation or damnation.

"Let us not therefore dream either of purgatory, or of prayer for the souls of them that be dead; but let us earnestly and diligently pray for them which are expressly commanded in holy scripture, namely, for kings and rulers, for ministers of God's holy word and sacraments, for the saints of this world, otherwise called *the faithful;* to be short, for all men living,

[s] 1 John i. Heb. ix. [t] Heb. x. [u] 1 John ii.

be they never so great enemies to God and his people, as Jews, Turks, pagans, infidels, heretics. Then shall we truly fulfil the commandment of God in that behalf, and plainly declare ourselves to be the true children of our heavenly Father, who *suffereth the sun to shine upon the good and bad, and the rain to fall upon the just and unjust.*

"For which, and all other benefits, most abundantly bestowed upon mankind from the beginning, let us give him hearty thanks, as we are most bound, and praise his name for ever and ever. Amen."

THE

COUNCIL OF TRENT

EXAMINED AND DISPROVED

BY

CATHOLIC TRADITION,

IN

THE MAIN POINTS IN CONTROVERSY BETWEEN US AND THE CHURCH OF ROME, WITH A PARTICULAR ACCOUNT OF THE TIMES AND OCCASIONS OF INTRODUCING THEM.

TO WHICH A PREFACE IS PREFIXED, CONCERNING THE TRUE SENSE OF THE COUNCIL OF TRENT, AND THE NOTION OF TRANSUBSTANTIATION.

THE PREFACE.

THERE is, it seems, a train in controversies, as well as in thoughts, one thing still giving a start to another; conferences produce letters; letters, books; and one discourse gives occasion for another. For this follows the former as a necessary pursuit of the same argument against tradition.

J. Serjeant, in his last Letter[a], had vouched the authority of the council of Trent producing upon tradition, and he instanced in three points, Transubstantiation, Sacramental Confession, and Extreme Unction. The examination of this I thought fit to reserve for a discourse by itself; wherein, instead of confining myself to those three particulars, I intend to go through the most material points there established; and to prove, from the most authentic testimonies, that there was no true catholic tradition for any of them. And if I can make good what I have undertaken, I shall make the council of Trent itself the great instance against the infallibility of tradition.

[a] Third Letter, p. 64.

This is a new undertaking, which the impetuousness of our adversaries, setting up tradition for the ground of their faith, hath brought me to. But besides the shewing that really they have not tradition on their side, I have endeavoured to trace the several steps, and to set down the times and occasions of introducing those points which have caused that unhappy breach in the Christian world, whose sad effects we daily see and lament, but have little hopes to see remedied, till these new points be discarded, and scripture, interpreted by truly catholic tradition, be made the standard of Christian communion.

I do not pretend that all these points came in at one time, or in the same manner; for some errors and corruptions came in far more early; some had the favour of the church of Rome in a higher degree; some were more generally received in the practice of the church in latter times than others; and some were merely school points before the council of Trent, but as far as the Thomists and Scotists could be made to agree there against the reformers, these passed for articles of faith. For this was one of the great arts of that council, to draw up their decrees in such terms as should leave room enough for eternal wranglings among themselves, provided they agreed in doing the business effectually against the heretics, as they were pleased to call them. I therefore forbear to urge these as points of faith, which have been freely debated among themselves since the council of Trent without any censure. We have enough in the plain decrees and canons of that council, without meddling with any school points. And so I cannot be charged with misrepresenting.

The great debate of late hath been about the true exposition of the points there defined; and for my part, I am content to yield to any just and reasonable methods of giving the true sense of them. And such I conceive these to be:

I. Where the council of Trent makes use of words in a strict and limited sense, there it is unreasonable to understand them in a large and improper sense. As for instance, sess. 6. c. 26, it decrees that justified persons do *vere promerere*, truly merit eternal life; and can. 32. there is an anathema against him who denies "true merit in the good works of justified persons, both as to increase of grace and eternal life." There is no one

conversant in ancient writers, but knows that there was a large and improper sense of the word *merit;* but how is it possible to apply that sense, where such care is taken that it may be understood in a strict and limited sense? If the council had left the word in its general sense, there might have been reason to have given the fairest interpretation to it; but when it is certainly known that there had been a difference of opinions in the church of Rome about true and proper merit, and that which was not, (however it were called,) and the council declares for the former, no man of understanding can believe that only the improper sense was meant by it. As in the point of the eucharist, when the council declares that the words of Christ, *This is my body,* are truly and properly to be understood; would it not be thought strange for any one to say that the council, notwithstanding, might mean that Christ's words may be figuratively understood? And we must take the true notion of merit, not from any large expressions of the ancients, but from the conditions of true and proper merit among themselves. But of this at large afterwards. So as to the notion of sacraments, every one knows how largely that word was taken in ancient writers; but it would be absurd to understand the council of Trent in that sense, when sess. 6. can. 1. *de Sacramentis,* it denounces an anathema, not merely against him that denies seven sacraments; but against him "that doth not hold every one of them to be truly and properly a sacrament." And in the Creed of Pius IV. one article is, that there are "seven true and proper sacraments." How vain a thing then were it for any to expound these sacraments in a large and improper sense!

II. Where the council of Trent hath not declared itself, but it is fully done in the Catechism made by its appointment, we ought to look on that as the true sense of the council. As in the case of the sacraments; the council never declares what it means by "true and proper sacraments;" but the Catechism[b] makes large and full amends for this defect. For after it hath mentioned the use of the word in profane and sacred writers, it sets down the sense of it, according to their divines, for "a sensible sign which conveys the grace which it signifies." And after a large explication of the nature of signs, it gives this de-

[b] Catechism. Rom. part 2.

scription of a true and proper sacrament, "that it is a sensible thing, which by Divine institution not only hath the force of signifying, but of causing grace." And to shew the authority of this Catechism for explicating the doctrine of the sacraments, we need only to look into sess. 24. c. 7. *de Reform.* where it is required that the people be instructed in the sacraments according to it. It is supposed, that the Catechism was appointed to be made in the 18th session at the instigation of Carolus Borromæus, (since canonized,) but it was not finished while the council sat, and therefore, sess. 25, "it was referred to the judgment and authority of the pope." I confess therefore it hath not a conciliar authority stamped upon it, but it hath a sort of transfused infallibility, as far as they could convey it; and as much as a council hath, when it borrows it from the pope's confirmation. It was near two years hammering at Trent, viz. from 26th of Feb. 1562, to Dec. 1563, when the council rose; afterwards, it was preparing at Rome three years longer, and then presented to the pope to be approved, and published by his authority, after it had been carefully reviewed by cardinal Sirlet, Borromeo, and others; and hath since been universally received in the Roman church; so that we can have no more authentic exposition of the sense of the council of Trent, than what is contained in that Catechism.

III. Where the council of Trent declares a thing in general to be lawful and due, but doth not express the manner of it, that is to be understood from the generally received and allowed practices at that time. For otherwise, the council must be charged with great unfaithfulness in not setting down and correcting public and notorious abuses, when it mentioned the things themselves, and some abuses about them. As in the 25th session, concerning purgatory, invocation of saints, worship of images and relics; it goes no further than that "the sound doctrine be taught, that saints are to be invocated, images and relics to be worshipped;" but never defines what that sound doctrine is, what bounds are to be set in the worship of saints, images, and relics, which it is unlawful to exceed. So that in this case, we have no other way to judge of the meaning of the council, but by comparing the public and allowed practices of the church with the general decrees of the council. And we have this further reason for it, that we are

told by the latest expositors of it, that the sense of the church in speculative points is to be taken from public practices. For thus one of them expresses himself[c]: "Moreover, even her speculative doctrines are so mixed with practical ceremonies, which represent them to the vulgar, and instruct even the meanest capacities in the abstrusest doctrines, that it seems ever impossible to make an alteration in her doctrine without abrogating her ceremonies, or changing her constant practices."

IV. Where the decrees of the council are not sufficiently clear, there we must take in the canons, to make the sense more plain. This rule I take from the council itself, which in the sixth session, just before the canons, saith, "that those are added, that all may know, not only what they are to hold and follow, but what they are to shun and avoid." As in the famous instance of transubstantiation: suppose that the words of the decree do not determine expressly the modus; yet it is impossible for any one to doubt of it who looks into the canon which denounces an anathema against him[d], not only that denies transubstantiation, but that asserts the substance of bread and wine to remain after consecration. Therefore he that asserts transubstantiation according to the council of Trent must hold it in such a manner, as thereby to understand "that the substance of bread and wine doth not remain." Otherwise he is under an anathema by the express canon of the council.

Therefore it is so far from being a fatal oversight, (as a late author expresses it,) to say that the council of Trent hath determined the modus of the real presence, that no man who is not resolved to oversee it can be of another opinion. And herein the divines of the church of Rome do agree with us, viz. that the particular modus is not only determined by the council, but that it is a matter of faith to all persons of the communion of that church. As not only appears from the second canon, but from the very decree itself, sess. 13. ch. 4:

"The holy synod declares, that by consecration of the bread and wine, there is a conversion of the whole substance of the bread into the substance of the body of Christ, and of the whole substance of the wine into the substance of his blood, which conversion is fitly and properly by the holy catholic church called *transubstantiation*." In which words the council

[c] Reply to the Defence of the Exposition, &c. p. 134. [d] Sess. 13. Can. 2.

doth plainly express the modus of the real presence to be, not by a presence of Christ's body together with the substance of the bread, as the Lutherans hold, but by a "conversion of the "whole substance of the bread into the substance of the body," &c. And since there were different manners of understanding this real presence, if the council did not espouse one so as to reject the other as heretical; then it is impossible to make the Lutheran doctrine to be declared to be heretical; i. e. unless the council did determine the modus of the real presence. For if it did not, then, notwithstanding the decrees and canons of the council of Trent, persons are at liberty to believe either transubstantiation or consubstantiation; which I think no Roman catholic will allow.

But it is said, that the meaning of the decree is, "that the real presence is not to be understood after a natural, but a sacramental manner;" but doth it not plainly tell us how that sacramental manner is to be understood, viz. "by a conversion of the whole substance of the bread into the whole substance of the body," &c. And if other ways be possible, and all others be rejected, then this particular modus must be determined.

I grant that the council doth not say, "there is an annihilation of the elements;" and I know no necessity of using that term; for that which is supposed to be turned into another thing cannot properly be said to be annihilated (which is the reducing it to nothing); but the council doth assert "a total conversion of one substance into another;" and where that is, that substance must wholly cease to be what it was; and so, there can be no substance of the elements remaining after consecration. For, as Aquinas observes, *Quod convertitur in aliquid, facta conversione non manet*[c]. If then the substance of the elements doth not remain after consecration, by virtue of this total conversion, then the council of Trent, by its decree, hath plainly determined the modus of the real presence, so as to exclude any such manner as doth suppose the substance to remain, whether it be by impanation or consubstantiation, or any other way.

What if Rupertus thought the bread might become the real body of Christ by an union of the Word to it? All that can be

[c] 3 Q. 75. A. 2.

inferred is, that the modus was not then so determined, as to oblige all persons to hold it. But what is this to the council of Trent? Can any one hold the substance to remain and not to remain at the same time? For he that holds with Rupertus, must allow the substance to remain; he that believes a total conversion must deny it. And he that can believe both these at once, may believe what he pleases.

But the council only declares the sacramental presence to be after an ineffable manner. I say, it determines it to be by a total conversion of one substance into another; which may well be said to be ineffable, since what cannot be understood can never be expressed.

Our dispute is not about the use of the word *transubstantiation*, for I think it proper enough to express the sense of the council of Trent; but as the word *consubstantial* did exclude all other modes how Christ might be the Son of God, and determined the faith of the church to that manner; so doth the sense of *transubstantiation*, as determined by the council of Trent, limit the manner of the real presence to such a conversion of the substance of the elements into the substance of Christ's body and blood, as doth imply no substance to remain after consecration.

It is to no purpose to tell us, "the council uses only the word *species*, and not *accidents*;" for whatever they are called, the council denounces its anathema against those "who hold the substance to remain after consecration; and deny the total conversion of the substance of the bread and wine into the substance of the body and blood of Christ." If the substance be not there, the modus is to purpose determined. And whatever remains, call it what you will, it is not the substance; and that is sufficient to shew, that the council of Trent hath clearly determined the modus of the real presence.

V. We must distinguish the school points left undetermined by the council of Trent, from those which are made articles of faith. We never pretend that it left no school disputes about the points there determined; but we say it went too far in making some school points to be points of faith, when it had been more for the peace of Christendom to have left them to the schools still. Thus in the point of transubstantiation, the elder schoolmen tell us, there were different ways of explaining

the real presence; and that those which supposed the substance to remain were more agreeable to reason and scripture than the other; and some were of opinion that the modus was no matter of faith then. But after the point of the real presence came to be warmly contested in the time of Berengarius, it rose by degrees higher and higher, till at last the particular modus came to be determined with an anathema by the council of Trent.

When Berengarius, A. D. 1059, was forced to recant by Nicolaus II, with the assistance of 113 bishops, no more was required of him, "than to hold, that the bread and wine after consecration are not only the sacrament, but the true body and blood of Christ, and that it is sensibly handled and broke by the priest's hands, and eaten by the communicants." Here is no denying the substance of bread to remain: and Joh. Parisiensis observes, that the words cannot be defended but by an assumption of the bread; for, saith he, "if the body of Christ be truly and sensibly handled and eaten, this cannot be understood of Christ's glorious body in heaven, but it must be of the bread really made the body of Christ after consecration."

The sense which the canonists put upon the words of this recantation is absurd, viz. "that they are to be understood of the species;" for Berengarius his opinion related to the substance of Christ's body, which he denied to be in the sacrament. And what would it have signified for him to have said, "that Christ was sensibly broken, and eaten under the species of bread and wine?" i. e. that his body was not sensibly broken and eaten, but the species were. It had signified something, if he had said, "there was no substance of bread and wine left, but only the species." But all the design of this recantation was to make him assert the "sacrament to be made the true and real body of Christ" in as strong a manner as the pope and his brethren could think of. And although the canonists think, if strictly taken, it implies greater heresy than that of Berengarius; yet by their favour, this form was only thought fit to be put into the canon law, as the standard of the faith of the Roman church then; and the following abjuration of Berengarius was only kept in the register of Gregory the VIIth's Epistles.

For about twenty years after, by order of Gregory the VIIth,

Berengarius was brought to another abjuration, but by no means after the same form with the former. For by this he was required to declare, "that the bread and wine are substantially converted into the true and proper flesh and blood of Christ, and after consecration are the true body of Christ born of the Virgin and sacrificed upon the cross, and that sits at the right hand of the Father; and the true blood of Christ which was shed out of his side, not only as a sacramental sign, but in propriety of nature and reality of substance."

This was indeed a pretty bold assertion of the substantial presence. And so much the bolder, if the Commentary on St. Matthew be Hildebrand's. For there he saith, "the manner of the conversion is uncertain." But as far as I can judge, by substantial conversion he did not then mean as the council of Trent doth, "a total conversion of one substance into another, so as that nothing of the former substance remains;" but "that there was a change by consecration, not by making the body of Christ of the substance of the bread, but by its passing into that body of Christ which was born of the Virgin." For, upon comparing the two forms, there we shall find lies the main difference. Pope Nicolaus went no further than to the true body of Christ; which it might be, as well by assumption as conversion; Gregory VII. went further, and thought it necessary to add, that the change was into the "substance of that body which was born of the Virgin," &c. And so this second form excludes a true body merely by assumption, and asserts the change to be "into the substance of Christ's body in heaven;" but it doth not determine that nothing of the substance of the elements doth remain. For when he puts that kind of substantial conversion which leaves nothing but the accidents, and the body of Christ to be under them, which belonged to the substance of the elements, he declares this matter to be uncertain. Which shews, that however a change was owned into the substance of Christ's body, yet such a total conversion as is determined by the council of Trent was not then made an article of faith.

But from this supposition made by Hildebrand, it appears that the doctrine of substance and accidents was then well known; and therefore the introducing Aristotle's Philosophy from the Arabians afterward, could make no alteration in this

matter. For the words of Hildebrand are as plain, as to the difference of substance and accidents, as of any of the schoolmen; and that the accidents of the bread and wine might be separated from the substance of them; but this was not then made a matter of faith, as it was afterwards.

But the case was remarkably altered, after the Lateran council under Innocent III. For transubstantiation being admitted there among the articles of faith; and so entered in the canon law in the very beginning of the decretals; this did not merely become a school term, but by the inquisitors of that time it was accounted heresy to deny it. It may be sufficiently proved by the schoolmen and canonists, that a difference of opinions as to the modus did still continue, (but that belongs to a more proper place,) and Joh. Parisiensis declares (p. 103.) "that the Lateran council, in his opinion, did not make transubstantiation a point of faith; or at least that substance was not to be taken for the matter, but the *suppositum*;" but the inquisitors went more briskly to work, and made it downright heresy to assert, "that the substance of the elements did remain after consecration."

Of this, we have full evidence in the register of Courtney, archbishop of Canterbury, (which is no "invisible manuscript.") For there we read, fol. 25, that he called a select "convocation of bishops, divines, and canonists," May 17, A. D. 1382, to declare some propositions to be heretical, and some to be erroneous and "contrary to the determination of the church." Among the first, these two are set down in the first place:

1. "That the material substance of the bread and wine doth remain in the sacrament of the altar after consecration."

2. "That the accidents do not remain without their subject in that sacrament after consecration."

After this, the archbishop sent forth his mandate to all his suffragans, not only to prohibit the preaching of that doctrine, but to inquire after those who preached it. And June 12, Robert Rygge, chancellor of Oxford, and Thomas Brightwell, appeared before him, and were examined upon these propositions; which they declared to be heretical: who thereupon required the publication of them as such in the university; and the proceeding against those who were suspected to favour them.

The ground the archbishop went upon was, "that these had been already condemned by the church," and therefore *ex abundanti*, "they declared them to be so condemned;" as appears by the monition given to Robert Rygge himself, as too much suspected to favour the contrary doctrine; as well as Nicholas Hereford, Philip Reppyndon, D. D., and John Ashton, B. D.

Against these, the archbishop proceeded as *inquisitor hæretica pravitatis per totam suam provinciam*, as it is in the record; who appearing, desired a copy of the several propositions, and then they were required to give in their judgment upon them. Ashton refused, but the other promised, which they performed soon after; and to these two propositions, their answers were,

To the first, "that as far as it was contrary to the decretal *Firmiter credimus*, it was heresy."

To the second, "that as far as it was contrary to the decretal *Cum Marthæ*, it was heresy."

These answers were judged insufficient, because they did not declare what that sense was. And the archbishop put this question to them, "Whether the same numerical material bread, which before consecration was set upon the altar, did remain in its proper substance and nature after consecration?" but they would give no other answer at that time. But afterwards Reppyndon abjured, and was made bishop of Lincoln.

From hence it appears, that it was then thought that the modus was so far determined by the Lateran council, that the contrary doctrine was declared not merely erroneous in faith, but heretical.

In the first convocation held by Th. Arundel, archbishop of Canterbury, A. D. 1396[f], a complaint was brought that several divines and others of the university of Oxford held some heretical and erroneous opinions; the first whereof was,

"That the substance of bread doth remain after consecration; and doth not cease to be bread;" which is there affirmed "to be heresy, speaking of material bread."

The second, "that the court of Rome, in the canon, *Ego Berengarius*, had determined that the sacrament of the eucharist is naturally true bread."

[f] Regist. f. 47.

It is very hard to say how this came to be then accounted heretical doctrine, when no less a man than Durandus in the same age affirms, "that the canonists grant that the opinion of the ceasing of the substance was grounded on the canon, *Firmiter credimus*," i. e. on the Lateran council; "but that of the remaining of the substance on that, *Ego Berengarius*." But however, it passed for heretical, or at least very erroneous doctrine here; but the main heresy was to hold, "that the substance remained."

For A. D. 1400, (as appears by the Register, p. 2. f. 179,) William Sawtre *alias* Chatris, a parochial priest in London, was summoned before the same archbishop in convocation, upon an information of heresy: and one of the main articles against him was, that he held "the substance of the bread to remain in the sacrament of the altar after consecration; and that it doth not cease to be bread." Sawtre answered, that he believed, "that after consecration, the bread did remain with the body of Christ: but it doth not cease to be simply bread, but it remains holy and true the bread of life and body of Christ." The archbishop examined him chiefly upon this article; and because he did not answer home to the point, he was condemned for a heretic, and was the first who was burned for heresy in England. And yet his answer was, "that he could not understand the matter;" then the archbishop asked him, "if he would stand to the church's determination;" he said, "he would so far as it was not contrary to the will of God." Upon which he was declared an heretic, and delivered over to the secular power.

In the same convocation, John Pervey made an abjuration of heresy, and the first he renounced was, "that after consecration in the sacrament of the altar there neither is nor can be an accident without a subject, and that the same substance and nature of bread remained which was before."

In the examination of William Thorp by Thomas Arundel, archbishop of Canterbury, A. D. 1407, (which is not in the register, being defective, but the account is preserved from his own copy,) the archbishop declared, "that the church had now determined, that there abideth no substance of bread after consecration in the sacrament of the altar. And that if he believed otherwise, he did not believe as the church be-

lieved." Thorp quoted St. Augustin and Fulgentius to prove "that the substance remained; and the very mass on Christmas day." The archbishop still pressed him with "the church's determination." Thorp said, "This was a school nicety, whether accidents could be without a subject;" "No," said the archbishop, "it is the faith of the church I go upon." Thorp replied, "It was not so for a thousand years after Christ."

In the examination of the lord Cobham, A. D. 1412, by the same archbishop, we find that he owned "the real presence of Christ's body" as firmly as his accusers[s]; but he was condemned for heresy, "because he held the substance of bread to remain." For the archbishop declared this to be the sense of the church; "that after consecration, remaineth no material bread or wine which were before, they being turned into Christ's very body and blood." The original words of the archbishop, as they are in the register, are these:

"The faith and the determination of holy church, touching the blestfull sacrament of the auter, is this, that after the sacramental words ben said by a prest in his masse, the material bred that was before is turned into Christ's veray body. And the material wyn that was before is turned into Christ's veray blode, and so there leweth in the auter no material brede ne material wyn, the wich wer ther byfore the saying of the sacramental words."

And the bishops afterwards stood up and said; "It is manifest heresy to say, that it is bread after the sacramental words be spoken; because it was against the determination of holy church."

But to make all sure, not many years after, May 4, A.D.1415, the council of Constance, session 8, declared the two propositions before mentioned to be heretical; viz. "to hold that the substance doth remain after consecration, and that the accidents do not remain without a subject."

Let any impartial reader now judge, whether it be any fatal oversight to assert, "that the modus of the real presence was determined by the council of Trent," when there were so many leading determinations to it, which were generally owned and received in the church of Rome. But there were other

[s] Regist. Arundel, p. 2. f. 143.

disputes remaining in the schools relating to this matter; which we do not pretend were ever determined by the council of Trent. As,

1. Whether the words of consecration are to be understood in a speculative or practical sense? For the Scotists say, in the former sense, they do by no means prove transubstantiation; since it may be truly said, *This is my body*, though the substance of bread do remain; and that they are to be understood in a practical sense, i. e. for converting the bread into the body, is not to be deduced *ex vi verborum*, from the mere force of the words, but from the sense of the church which hath so understood them. Which in plain terms is to say, it cannot be proved from scripture, but from the sense of the church; and so Scotus doth acknowledge, but then he adds, "that we are to judge this to be the sense of scripture, because the church hath declared it." Which he doth not think was done before the council of Lateran. So that this council must be believed to have had as infallible a spirit in giving this sense of scripture, as there was in the writing of it; since it is not drawn from the words, but added to them. On the other side, the Thomists insist on the force of the words themselves; for if, they say, from the words be inferred that there is a real presence of the substance of Christ's body, then it follows thence that there is no substance of the bread remaining; for a substance cannot be where it was not before, but it must either change its place, or another must be turned into it; as fire in a house must either be brought thither, or some other thing must be turned into fire; but, say they, the body of Christ cannot be brought from heaven thither, for then it must leave the place it had there; and must pass through all the bodies between; and it is impossible for the same body to be locally present in several places; and therefore the body of Christ cannot otherwise be really and substantially present, but by the conversion of the substance of the bread into it.

2. In what manner the body of Christ is made to be present in the sacrament? The Scotists say, it is impossible to conceive it otherwise than by bringing it from the place where it already is; the Thomists say that is impossible, since that body must be divided from itself by so many other bodies interposing. The former is said to be an *adductive* conversion,

the latter a *productive*; but then here lies another difficulty, how there can be a productive conversion of a thing already in being. But my business is not to give an account of these school disputes; but to shew how different they were from the point of transubstantiation; and that both these disputing parties did agree, that the modus of the real presence was defined to be, "by changing the substance of the elements into the body and blood of Christ;" but they still warmly disputed about the modus of that modus; viz. how a body already in being could be present in so many places, without leaving that place where it was already. And no man who hath ever looked into these school disputes can ever imagine that they disputed about the truth of the doctrine of transubstantiation, but only about the manner of explaining it. Wherein they do effectually overthrow each other's notions, without being able to establish their own; as the elector of Cologn truly observed of their debates about this matter in the council of Trent.

VI. Where the sense of words hath been changed by the introducing new doctrines, there the words ought to be understood according to the doctrine at that time received. Of this we have two remarkable instances in the council of Trent.

The first is about indulgences, which that council in its last session never went about to define; but made use of the old word, and so declares both scripture and antiquity for the use of them. But there had been a mighty change in the doctrine about them, since the word was used in the Christian church. No doubt there was a power in the church to relax canonical penances in extraordinary cases; but what could that signify when the canonical discipline was laid aside, and a new method of dealing with penitents was taken up, and another trade driven with respect to purgatory pains? For here was a new thing carried on under an old name. And that hath been the great artifice of the Roman church, where it hath evidently gone off from the old doctrines, yet to retain the old names, that the unwary might still think the things were the same, because the names were. As in the present case, we deny not the use of indulgences in the primitive church, as the word was used for relaxations of the canonical discipline; but we

utterly deny it as to the pains of purgatory. And that this was the sense then received in the church of Rome appears from the papal constitutions of Boniface the VIIIth, Clemens the VIth, and Leo the Xth. But of these, more hereafter.

The other instance is in the word *species*, used by the council of Trent, sess. 13. can. 2, where an anathema is denounced against him that denies the conversion of the whole substance of the elements into the body and blood of Christ, the species of bread and wine only remaining.

Now a controversy hath been started in the church of Rome, what is to be understood by *species*, whether real accidents, or only appearances.

Some of the church of Rome, who have had a taste of the new philosophy, reject any real accidents, and yet declare transubstantiation to be a matter of faith, and go about to explain the notion of it in another manner. Among these, one Emanuel Maignan [h], a professor of divinity at Tholouse, hath at large undertaken this matter. The method he takes is this:

1. He grants that nothing remains of the bread after consecration, but that whereby it was an object of sense; because that which is really the being of one thing cannot be the being of another. And he confesses that the modus, as to the not being of the substance after consecration, is determined by the councils of Constance and Trent.

2. He asserts that real accidents, supposing them separable from the substance, are not that whereby the elements are made the objects of sense; because they do not make the conjunction between the object and the faculty.

3. Since he denies that accidents have any real being distinct from the substance they are in, he grants, that it is as much a matter of faith, that there are no real accidents after consecration, as that there is no real substance; and he brings the authorities of the councils of Lateran, Florence, and Trent, to prove it.

4. As the substance did by Divine concourse so act upon the senses before, as to make it be an object of sense; so after consecration, God, by his immediate act, makes the same appearances, although the substance be gone. And this, he

[h] Maignan Philosophia Sacra, part 2. Append. 5.

saith, is the effect of this miraculous conversion, which is concealed from our senses, by God's immediate causing the very same appearances, which came before from the substance. Which appearances, he saith, are the species mentioned by the council of Trent, and other elder councils and Fathers.

Against this new hypothesis, a famous Jesuit, Theophylus Raynaudus, opposed himself with great vehemency, and urged these arguments against it:

1. That it overthrows the very nature of a sacrament, leaving no external visible sign; but a perpetual illusion of the senses, in such a manner, that the error of one cannot be corrected by another.

2. That it overthrows the design of the sacrament, which is to be true and proper food: *My flesh is meat indeed*, &c. John vi. which, he saith, is to be understood of the sacrament, as well as of the body of Christ, and therefore cannot agree with an imaginary appearance.

3. It is not consistent with the accidents which befall the sacramental species, as "to be trod under foot, to be cast into indecent places, to be devoured by brutes, to be putrified," &c. If the body of Christ withdraws, there must be something beyond mere appearances.

4. He makes this doctrine to be heretical, because the council of Constance condemned it as an heretical proposition, to affirm, "that in the eucharist, accidents do not remain without their subject;" and because the council of Trent uses the word *species* in the sense then generally received, and so it signified the same with *accidents*. Which, saith he, further appears, because the council speaks of the *species remaining*; but if there be no real accidents, the species doth not remain in the object, but a new appearance is produced. And it seems most reasonable to interpret the language of the council according to the general sense wherein the words were understood at that time.

VII. What things were disputed and opposed by some in the council, without being censured for it, although they were afterwards decreed by a major party, yet cannot be said to have been there received by a catholic tradition. Because matters of faith which have been universally received in the church, can never be supposed to be contested in a council

without censure; but if it appears that there were heats and warm debates among the parties in the council itself, and both think they speak the sense of the catholic church; then we must either allow that there was then no known catholic tradition about those matters, or that the divines of the church of Rome, assembled in council, did not understand what it was. And what happens to be decreed by a majority, can never be concluded from thence to have been the tradition before, because there was a different sense of others concerning it. And since in a division, a single person may make a majority, it will be very hard to believe that he carries infallibility and catholic tradition along with him.

But I think it reasonable, in the inquiry after catholic tradition, to take notice of the different opinions in the council, and among the schoolmen before it; and not only to observe what was the sense of the Roman church, but of the Eastern churches too; and where the matter requires it, to go through the several ages of the church, up to the apostolical times; that I may effectually prove, that in the main points in controversy between us, which are established by the council of Trent, there cannot be produced any catholic and apostolical tradition for them.

There are two things designed by me in this treatise:

1. To shew that there is no such thing as universal tradition for the main points in controversy between us and the church of Rome, as they are determined by the council of Trent.

2. To give an account by what steps and degrees, and on what occasions, those doctrines and practices came into the church.

But before I come to particulars, I shall lay down some reasonable *postulata*.

1. That a catholic tradition must be universally received among the sound members of the catholic church.

2. That the force of tradition lies in the certainty of conveyance of matters of faith from the apostolical times. For no new doctrines being pretended to, there can be no matter of faith in any age of the church, but what was so in the precedent, and so up to the apostles' times.

3. That it is impossible to suppose the divines of the catholic church to be ignorant what was in their own time received for catholic tradition. For if it be so hard for others to mistake it, it will be much more so for those whose business is to inquire into, and to deliver matters of faith.

These things premised, I now enter upon the points themselves; and I begin with,

I. Traditions being a rule of faith equal with scriptures.

This is declared by the council of Trent as the groundwork of their proceedings.

The words are, sess. 4, "That the council receives traditions both as to faith and manners[1], either delivered by Christ himself with his own mouth, or dictated by the Holy Ghost, and preserved in the catholic church by a continual succession, with equal piety of affection and reverence, as the proofs of holy scripture."

Where the council first supposes there are such traditions from Christ and the Holy Ghost, distinct from scripture, which relate to faith; and then it declares equal respect and veneration due to them. No one questions but the word of Christ, and dictates of the Holy Ghost, deserve equal respect, howsoever conveyed to us; but the point is, whether there was a catholic tradition before this time for an unwritten word, as a foundation of faith, together with the written word.

1. It is therefore impertinent here to talk of a tradition before the written word; for our debate is concerning both being joined together to make a perfect rule of faith; and yet this is one of the common pleas on behalf of tradition.

2. It is likewise impertinent to talk of that tradition, whereby we do receive the written word. For the council first supposes the written word to be received and embraced as the word of God, before it mentions the unwritten word; and therefore it cannot be understood concerning that tradition whereby we receive the scriptures. And the council affirms, "that the truth of the gospel is contained partly in books that are written, and partly in unwritten traditions." By the truth of the gospel they cannot mean the scriptures being the word

[1] Necnon traditiones ipsas, tum ad fidem tum ad mores pertinentes, tanquam vel ore tenus a Christo vel a Spiritu sancto dictatas, et continua successione in ecclesia catholica conservatas, pari pietatis affectu ac reverentia suscipit et veneratur.

of God, but that the word was contained partly in scripture, and partly in tradition; and it is therefore impertinent to urge the tradition for scripture to prove tradition to be part of the rule of faith, as it is here owned by the council of Trent.

3. The council doth not here speak of a traditionary sense of scripture, but of a distinct rule of faith from the scripture. For of that it speaks afterwards in the decree about the use of the scripture; where it saith, "no man ought to interpret scripture against the sense of the church, to whom it belongs to judge of the true sense and meaning of scripture, nor against the unanimous consent of the Fathers." Whereby it is evident, the council is not to be understood of any consequences drawn out of scripture concerning things not expressly contained in it; but it clearly means an unwritten word distinct from the written, and not contained in it; which, together with that, makes up a complete rule of faith. This being the true sense of the council, I shall now shew that there was no catholic tradition for it.

Which I shall prove by these steps:

1. From the proceedings of the council itself.

2. From the testimony of the divines of that church before the council for several centuries.

3. From the canon law received and allowed in the church of Rome.

4. From the ancient offices used in that church.

5. From the testimony of the Fathers.

1. From the proceedings of the council about this matter.

By the *postulata* it appears that a catholic tradition is such as must be known by the sound members of the church, and especially of the divines in it. But it appears by the most allowed histories of that council, this rule of faith was not so received there. For cardinal Pallavicini tells us, that it was warmly debated, and canvassed even by the bishops themselves. The bishop of Fano (Bertanus) urged against it [k], "that God had not given equal firmness to tradition as he had done to scripture, since several traditions had failed." But the bishop of Bitonto (Mussus) opposed him, and said, "Though all truths were not to be equally regarded, yet every word of

[k] Hist. Concil. Trident. l. 6. c. 14. n. 3.

God ought, and traditions as well as scripture were the word of God, and the first principles of faith, and the greater part of the council followed him." It seems then, there was a division in the council about it; but how could that be, if there were a catholic tradition about this rule of faith? Could the bishops of the catholic church, when assembled in council to determine matters of faith, be no better agreed about the rule of faith; and yet must we believe there was at that time a known catholic tradition about it, and that it was impossible they should err about such a tradition? Nay further, the same author tells us, that although this bishop had gained the greatest part of the council to him, yet his own heart misgave him, and in the next congregation himself proposed, that instead of *equal*, it might be put *a like veneration;* and yet we must believe there was a catholic tradition for an equal veneration to scripture and tradition. "But the bishop of Chioza" (Naclantus), he saith, "inveighed more bitterly against this equality," and in the face of the council "charged the doctrine with impiety;" [l] and he would not allow any Divine inspiration to tradition, but that they were to be considered only as laws of the church. It is true, he saith he professed to consent to the decree afterwards, but withal he tells us, that he was brought under the inquisition not long after, upon suspicion of heresy; which shews they were not well satisfied with his submission. We are extremely beholden to cardinal Pallavicini for his information in these matters, which are passed over too jejunely by F. Paul.

2. I proceed to the testimony of the divines of the Roman church before the council of Trent. It is observed by some of them, that when the Fathers appealed to the tradition of the church in any controverted point of faith, they made their appeal to those who wrote before the controversy was started; as St. Augustin [m] did against the Pelagians, &c. This is a reasonable method of proceeding, in case tradition be a rule of faith: and therefore must be so even in this point, whether tradition be such a rule or not. For the divines who wrote before, could not be ignorant of the rule of faith they received among themselves.

Gabriel Biel lived in the latter end of the fifteenth century,

[l] N. 4. [m] Aug. l. 2. c. Julian.

and he affirms[n], "that the scripture alone teaches all things necessary to salvation;" and he instances "in the things to be done and to be avoided, to be loved and to be despised, to be believed and to be hoped for." And again[o], "that the will of God is to be understood by the scriptures, and by them alone we know the whole will of God." If the whole will of God were to be known by the scripture, how could part of it be preserved in an unwritten tradition? And if this were then part of the rule of faith, how could such a man, who was professor of divinity at Tubing, be ignorant of it? I know he saith he took the main of his book from the lectures of Eggelingus, in the cathedral church at Mentz; but this adds greater strength to the argument, since it appears hereby that this doctrine was not confined to the schools, but openly delivered in one of the most famous churches of Germany.

Cajetan died not above twelve years before the council, who agrees with this doctrine of Biel or Eggelingus, (and he was accounted the oracle of his time for divinity,) for he affirms[p], "that the scripture gives such a perfection to a man of God, (or one that devoutly serves him,) that thereby he is accomplished for every good work." How can this be, if there be another rule of faith quite distinct from the written word?

Bellarmine indeed grants, "[q]that all things which are simply necessary to the salvation of all, are plainly contained in scripture," by which he yields, that the scripture alone is the rule of faith as to necessary points; and he calls the scripture, "the certain and stable rule of faith[r]," yea, "the most certain and most secure rule[s]." If there be then any other, it must be less certain, and about points not necessary to salvation[t]; i. e. it must be a rule where there is no need of a rule. For if

n Et cætera nostræ saluti necessaria, quæ omnia sola docet sacra scriptura. Lection. in Can. Missæ 71.

o Hæc autem in sacris scripturis disenntur, per quas solas plenam intelligere possumus Dei voluntatem. Ib.

p Ecce quo tendit utilitas Divinæ scripturæ ad perfectionem hominis Dei (hoc est, qui totum seipsum Deo dat) perfectionem inquam talem ut sit perfectus ad omne bonum exercendum. In 2. ad Tim. iii. 16.

q Dico illa omnia scripta esse ab apostolis quæ sunt omnibus necessaria, et quæ ipsi palam omnibus vulgo prædicaverunt. Bellarm. de verbo Dei, l. 4. c. 11.

r Illud imprimis statuendum erit, propheticos et apostolicos libros juxta mentem ecclesiæ catholicæ verum esse verbum Dei, et certam ac stabilem regulam fidei. Id. l. 1. c. 1.

s At sacris scripturis quæ propheticis et apostolicis literis continentur, nihil est notius, nihil certius. Id. c. 2.

t Quare cum sacra scriptura regula credendi certissima tutissimaque sit. Ibid.

men's salvation be sufficiently provided for, by the written rule; and the Divine revelation be in order to men's salvation, what need any other revelation to the church, besides what is written?

He asserts further [u], "that nothing is *de fide*, but what God hath revealed to the prophets and apostles, or is deduced from thence." This he brings to prove "that whatsoever was received as a matter of faith in the church, which is not found in scripture, must have come from an apostolical tradition." But if it be *necessary to salvation*, according to his own concession, it must be written; and if it be not, how comes it to be received as a matter of faith? unless it be first proved, that it is necessary to salvation to receive an unwritten rule of faith, as well as a written; for, either it must be necessary on its own account, and then he saith it must be written; and if not, then it can be no otherwise necessary than because it is to be believed on the account of a rule which makes it necessary. And consequently that rule must be first proved to be a necessary article of faith: which Bellarmine hath nowhere done, but only sets down rules about knowing true apostolical traditions from others in matters of faith, wherein he wisely supposes that which he was to prove.

And the true occasion of setting up this new rule of faith is intimated by Bellarmine himself, in his first rule of judging true apostolical traditions. Which is, "when the church believes any thing as a doctrine of faith, which is not in scripture, then," saith he, "we must judge it to be an apostolical tradition." Why so? "Otherwise the church must have erred in taking that for a matter of faith which was not." And this is the great secret about this new rule of faith; they saw plainly several things were imposed on the faith of Christians, which could not be proved from scripture; and they must not yield they had once mistaken, and therefore this new, additional, less certain rule for unnecessary points, must be advanced, although they wanted tradition among themselves to prove tradition a rule of faith; which I shall now further make appear, from their own school divines, before the council of Trent.

We are to observe among them, what those are which they strictly call *theological truths*, and by them we shall judge

[u] Lib. 4. c. 9.

what they made the rule of faith. For they do not make a bare revelation to any person a sufficient ground for faith; but they say[x], "the revelation must be public, and designed for the general benefit of the church;" and so Aquinas determines[y] "that our faith rests only upon the revelations made to the prophets and apostles; and theological truths are such as are immediately deduced from the principles of faith, i. e. from public Divine revelations owned and received by the church." The modern schoolmen[z], who follow the council of Trent, make theological truths to be deduced from the unwritten, as well as the written word; or else they would not speak consonantly to their own doctrine. And therefore if those before them deduce theological truths only from the written word, then it will follow that they did not hold the "unwritten word to be a rule of faith."

Marsilius ab Inghen[a] was first professor of divinity at Heidelberg, (at the latter end of the fifteenth century, saith Bellarmine, but Trithemius saith the fourteenth,) and he determines, "that a theological proposition is that which is positively asserted in scripture, or deduced from thence by good consequence; and that a theological truth, strictly taken, is the truth of an article of faith, or something expressed in the Bible, or deduced from thence." He mentions apostolical traditions afterwards, and joins them with ecclesiastical histories and martyrologies. So far was he from supposing them to be part of the rule of faith.

In the beginning of the fifteenth century lived Petrus de Alliaco[b], one as famous for his skill in divinity as for his dignity in the church: he saith, "that theological discourse is founded on scripture, and a theological proof must be drawn from thence; that theological principles are the truths contained in the canon of scripture; and conclusions are such as are drawn out of what is contained in scripture." So that he not only makes the scripture the foundation of faith, but of all sorts of true reasoning about it. He knew nothing of cardinal Pallavicini's two first principles of faith.

[x] Et quantum ad ea quæ proponuntur omnibus credenda, quæ pertinent ad fidem 2. 2. q. 171. prol.

[y] 1. q. 1 a. 5.

[z] Melch. Can. l. 12. c. 3.

[a] Marsil. in 4. lib. Sentent. l. 1. Proœm. q. 2. art. 2.

[b] Pet. de Alliaco in Sent l. 1. q. 1 & 3.

To the same purpose speaks Gregorius Ariminensis[c], about the middle of the fourteenth century: he saith, "all theological discourse is grounded on scripture, and the consequences from it;" which he not only proves from testimony, but *ex communi omnium conceptione*, "from the general consent of Christians." For, saith he, "all are agreed that then a thing is proved theologically, when it is proved from the words of scripture." So that here we have plain tradition against traditions being a distinct rule of faith, and this delivered by the general of an order in the church of Rome. He affirms, that the principles of theology are no other than the truths contained in the canon of scripture; and that the resolution of all theological discourse is into them; and that there can be no theological conclusion but what is drawn from scripture.

In the former part of that century lived Durandus[d]; he gives a threefold sense of theology. 1. "For a habit whereby we assent to those things which are contained in scripture, as they are there delivered. 2. For a habit whereby those things are defended and declared which are delivered in scripture[e]. 3. For a habit of those things which are deduced out of articles of faith; and so it is all one with the holy scripture[f]."

And in another place he affirms, "that all truth is contained in the holy scripture at large; but for the people's conveniency, the necessary points are summed up in the Apostles' Creed[g]."

In his preface before his book on the Sentences, he highly commends the scriptures for their dignity, their usefulness, their certainty, their depth; and after all, concludes, "that in matters of faith, men ought to speak agreeably to the scriptures; and whosoever doth not, breaks the rule of the scriptures," which he calls "the measure of our faith." What tradition did appear then for another rule of faith in the 14th century?

But before I proceed higher, I shall shew the consent of others with these school divines in the three last centuries before the council of Trent. In the middle of the 15th lived Nicolaus Panormitanus, one of mighty reputation for his skill

[c] Greg. Arimin. q. 1. a. 2. [d] Durand. Prol. q. 5. n. 9. [e] A. 13.
[f] N. 21. [g] L. 3. dist. 25. q. 2.

in the canon law. In the chapter *Significasti primo*, 1. *de Electione*, debating the authority of pope and council, he saith[h], "If the pope hath better reason, his authority is greater than the council's; and if any private person in matters of faith hath better reason out of scripture than the pope, his saying is to be preferred above the pope's." Which words do plainly shew, that the scripture was then looked on as the only rule of faith; or else no man's grounding himself on scripture could make his doctrine to be preferred before the pope's; who might allege tradition against him, and if that were an equal rule of faith, the doctrine of one rule could not be preferred before the other.

At the same time lived Tostatus, the famous bishop of Avila, one of infinite industry and great judgment, and therefore could not be mistaken in the rule of faith. In his preface on Genesis, he saith[i], "that there must be a rule for our understandings to be regulated by, and that rule must be most certain; that Divine faith is the most certain, and that is contained in scripture, and therefore we must regulate our understandings thereby. And this he makes to be the measure of truth and falsehood." If he knew any other rule of faith besides the scriptures, he would have mentioned it in this place; and not have directed men only to them, as the exact measure of truth and falsehood.

In the beginning of this century, Thomas Walden (confessor to our Henry V, saith Trithemius) disputed sharply against Wickliff; but he durst not set up the church's authority or tradition equal with the scriptures. For when he mentions tradition after scriptures, he utterly "disclaims any such thought as that of equality between them[k];" but he desires a due distance may be kept between canonical scripture and ecclesiastical authority, or tradition. In the first place, he saith, "we ought to believe the holy scriptures:" then, "the de-

[h] "Nam in concernentibus fidem, etiam dictum unius privati esset præferendum dicto papæ, si ille moveretur melioribus rationibus Novi et Veteris Testamenti quam papæ."

[i] "Cum ergo in omni veritate veritas divina sit certior et immutabilior, ergo omnes aliæ debent regulari per illam, et in quantum conformantur illi, sunt veræ; in quantum autem deviant ab illa, deviant a natura veritatis. Sacra autem scriptura veritas divina est, ideo judicium nostrum debemus regulare per illam applicando ad eam." &c. Tostat. in Ep. Hieron. c. 6. p. 28. D.

[k] "Non quod in auctoritate æquantur, absit; sed æquantur; non quidem in subsidium auctoritatis canonicæ, sed in admonitionem posterorum." l. 2. art. 2. c. 22.

finitions and customs of the catholic church [l];" but he more fully explains himself in another place, where he plainly asserts [m], "that nothing else is to be received by such faith as the scripture and Christ's symbolical church; but for all other authorities, the lowest degree is that of catholic tradition; the next of the bishops, especially of the apostolical churches, and the Roman in the first place; and above all these, he places that of a general council;" but when he hath so done, he saith, "all these authorities are to be regarded but as the instructions of elders, and admonitions of Fathers." So that the chief opposers of Wickliff had not yet found out this new rule of faith.

Much about the same time lived Joh. Gerson [n], whom cardinal Zabarella declared, in the council of Constance, "to be the greatest divine of his time," and therefore could not be ignorant of the true rule of faith. He agrees with Panormitan in this, "that if a man be well skilled in scripture, his doctrine deserves more to be regarded than the pope's declaration; for," saith he, "the gospel is more to be believed than the pope, and if such a one teaches a doctrine to be contained in scripture, which the pope either knows not, or mistakes, it is plain whose judgment is to be preferred." Nay, he goes further, "that if in a general council he finds the majority incline to that part which is contrary to scripture, he is bound to oppose it," and he instances in Hilary. And he shews, "that since the canon of scripture is received by the church, no authority of the church is to be equalled to it [o]." He allows a judgment of discretion in private persons, and a certainty of the literal sense of scripture attainable thereby. He makes "the scripture the only standing infallible rule of faith for the whole church to the end of the world. And whatever doctrine is not agreeable thereto, is to be rejected either as heretical, suspicious, or impertinent to religion [p]." If the council

[l] C. 28.

[m] C. 27.

[n] Joh. Gerson, Exam. Doctr. p. 540. part. 1. cons. 5.

[o] Cons. 6.

[p] "Nihil audendum dicere de divinis, nisi quæ nobis a sacra scriptura tradita sunt. Cujus ratio est, quoniam scriptura nobis tradita est tanquam regula sufficiens et infallibilis, pro regimine totius ecclesiastici corporis et membrorum usque in finem seculi. Est igitur talis ars, talis regula, vel exemplar, cui se non conformans alia doctrina, vel abjicienda est ut hæreticalis, aut suspecta, aut impertinens ad religionem prorsus est habenda." Exam. Doctr. part. 2. consid. 1.

of Trent had gone by this rule, we had never heard of the Creed of Pius IV.

In the beginning of the 14th century lived Nicholaus de Lyra[q], who parallels the scriptures in matters of faith with first principles in sciences; for "as other truths are tried in them by their reduction to first principles, so are matters of faith by their reduction to canonical scriptures, which are of Divine revelation, which is impossible to be false." If he had known any other principles which would have made faith impossible to be false, he would never have spoken thus of scripture alone. But to return to the school divines.

About the same time lived Joh. Duns Scotus[r], the head of a school famous for subtilty: he affirms, "that the holy scripture doth sufficiently contain all matters necessary to salvation: because by it we know what we are to believe, hope for, and practise." And after he hath enlarged upon them, he concludes in these words, *Patet quod scriptura sacra sufficienter continet doctrinam necessarium viatori.* If this be understood only of points simply necessary, then however it proves, that all such things necessary to salvation are therein contained; and no man is bound to inquire after unnecessary points. How then can it be necessary to embrace another rule of faith, when all things necessary to salvation are sufficiently contained in scripture?

But Thomas Aquinas is more express in this matter: for he saith, "that those things which depend on the will of God, and are above any desert of ours, can be known no otherwise by us than as they are delivered in scripture, by which the will of God is made known to us[s]."

This is so remarkable a passage, that Suarez[t] could not let it escape without corrupting it; for instead of scripture, he makes him to speak of Divine revelation in general, viz. under scripture he comprehends all, that is, under the written word he means the unwritten. If he had meant so, he was able to have expressed his own mind more plainly; and Cajetan apprehended no such meaning in his words. But this is a matter

q Lyra, Præfat. ad lib. Tobiæ.

r Scot. in Sentent. Prolog. q. 2. n. 14.

s "Ea enim quæ ex sola Dei voluntate supra omne debitum creaturæ, nobis innotescere non possunt, nisi quatenus in sacra scriptura traduntur, per quam Divina voluntas nobis innotescit." 3. q. 1. a. 3. in C.

t Suarez in 3. p. 117.

of so great consequence, that I shall prove from other passages in him that he asserted the same doctrine, viz. "that the scripture was the only rule of faith."

1. He makes "no proofs of matters of faith to be sufficient but such as are deduced from scripture, and all other arguments from authority to be only probable; nay, although such persons had particular revelations[u]." How can this be consistent with another rule of faith distinct from scripture? For if he had owned any such, he must have deduced necessary arguments from thence, as well as from canonical scriptures. But if all other authorities be only probable, then they cannot make any thing necessary to be believed.

2. He affirms, "that to those who receive the scriptures, we are to prove nothing but by the scriptures as matter of faith[x]." For by authorities, he means nothing but the scriptures; as appears by the former place, and by what follows[y], where he mentions the canon of scripture expressly.

3. He asserts, "that the articles of the Creed are all contained in scripture, and are drawn out of scripture, and put together by the church only for the ease of the people[z]." From hence it necessarily follows, that the reason of believing the articles of the Creed is to be taken from the written word, and not from any unwritten tradition. For else he needed not to have been so careful to shew that they were all taken out of scripture.

4. He distinguisheth the matters of faith in scripture, some to be believed for themselves, which he calls *prima credibilia;* these, he saith[a], "every one is bound explicitly to believe; but

u "Authoritatibus autem canonicæ scripturæ utitur proprie ex necessitate argumentando; autoritatibus autem aliorum doctorum ecclesiæ, quasi arguendo ex propriis sed probabiliter. Innititur enim fides nostra revelationi apostolis et prophetis factæ, qui canonicos libros scripserunt; non autem revelationi si qua fuit aliis doctoribus facta." 1. q. 1. a. 8. ad 2.

x Quæ igitur fidei sunt, non sunt tentanda probari nisi per autoritates his qui autoritates suscipiunt. 1. q. 32. a. 1. c.

y Si autem ad veritatem eloquiorum, sc. sacrorum respicit, hoc et nos canone utimur. Ibid.

z "Dicendum quod veritas fidei in sacra scriptura diffuse continetur—— ideo fuit necessarium ut ex sententiis sacræ scripturæ aliquid manifestum summarie colligeretur, quod proponeretur omnibus ad credendum; quod quidem non est additum sacræ scripturæ, sed potius ex sacra scriptura sumptum." 2. 2. q. 1. a. 9. ad primum."

a "Quantum ad prima credibilia, quæ sunt articuli fidei, tenetur homo explicite credere, sicut et tenetur habere fidem. Quantum autem ad alia credibilia non tenetur homo explicite credere, sed solum implicite, vel in præparatione animi in quantum paratus est credere quicquid scriptura continet; sed tunc solum hujusmodi tenetur explicite credere, quando hoc ei constiterit in doctrina fidei contineri." 2. 2. q. 2. a. 5. c.

for other things he is bound only implicitly, or in a preparation of mind, to believe whatever is contained in scripture; and then only is he bound to believe explicitly, when it is made clear to him, to be contained in the doctrine of faith." Which words must imply the scripture to be the only rule of faith; for otherwise, implicit faith must relate to whatever is proved to be an unwritten word.

From all this it appears, that Aquinas knew nothing of a traditional rule of faith; although he lived after the Lateran council, A. D. 1215, being born about nine years after it.

And Bonaventure, who died the same year with him, affirms [b], "that nothing was to be said" (about matters of faith) "but what is made clear out of the holy scriptures."

Not long after them lived Henricus Gandavensis; and he delivers these things which are very material to our purpose.

1. "That the reason why we believe the guides of the church since the apostles, who work no miracles, is, because they preach nothing but what they have left in their most certain writings, which are delivered down to us pure and uncorrupt, by an universal consent of all that succeeded to our times [c]." Where we see he makes the scriptures to be the only certain rule, and that we are to judge of all other doctrines by them.

2. "That truth is more certainly preserved in scripture than in the church, because that is fixed and immutable, and men are variable, so that multitudes of them may depart from the faith, either through error or malice; but the true church will always remain in some righteous persons [d]." How then can tradition be a rule of faith equal with scriptures, which depends upon the testimony of persons who are so very fallible?

I might carry this way of testimony on higher still, as when

[b] "Et nihil nobis dicendum est, præter ea quæ nobis ex sacris eloquiis clarent." Bonav. in 3. sent. dist. 1. art 2. q. 2.

[c] "Quod autem credimus posterioribus circa quos non apparent virtutes divinæ, hoc est, quia non prædicant alia quam quæ illi in scriptis certissimis reliquerunt, quæ constat per medios in nullo fuisse vitiata ex consensione concordi in eis omnium succedentium usque ad tempora nostra." Hen. Gandav. Sum. art. 9. q. 3. n. 13. 2.

[d] "Quia veritas ipsa in scriptura immobiliter et impermutabiliter semper custoditur.—In personis autem Ecclesiæ mutabilis est et variabilis, ut dissentire fidei possit multitudo illorum, et vel per errorem, vel per malitiam a fide discedere liceat; semper ecclesia in aliquibus justis stabit." Art. 8. q. 1. n. 5.

Richardus de S. Victore saith, in the 13th century, "that every truth is suspected by him, which is not confirmed by holy scripture[e];" but instead of that, I shall now proceed to the canon law, as having more authority than particular testimonies.

3. As to the canon law, collected by Gratian, I do not insist upon its confirmation by Eugenius, but upon its universal reception in the church of Rome. And from thence I shall evidently prove, that tradition was not allowed to be a rule of faith equal with the scriptures.

Dist. 9. c. 3—5, 7—10. "The authority and infallibility of the holy scripture is asserted above all other writings whatsoever; for all other writings are to be examined, and men are to judge of them as they see cause."

Now Bellarmine tells us[f], "that the unwritten word is so called, not that it always continues unwritten, but that it was so by the first author of it." So that the unwritten word doth not depend on mere oral tradition, according to him, but it may be found in the writers of the church[g]; but the canon law expressly excludes all other writings, let them contain what they will, from being admitted to any competition with canonical scripture; and therefore, according to that, no part of the rule of faith was contained in any other than canonical scriptures.

Dist. 37. c. *Relatum;* A man is supposed "to have an entire and firm rule of faith in the scriptures[h]."

Caus. 8. q. 1. c. *Nec sufficere*[i]; "The scriptures are said to be the only rule both of faith and life."

And the gloss on the canon law there owns the scripture to be the rule for matters of faith; but very pleasantly applies it to the clergy, and thinks images enough for the laity.

Caus. 24. q. 1. c. *Non afferentes.* The scriptures are acknowledged to be the true balance; and that we are not so much to weigh what we find there, as to own what we find

e "Suspecta est mihi omnis veritas, quam non confirmat scripturarum auctoritas." Rich. de S. Victore, de Præpar. Animi ad Contempl. part. 1. c. 81.

f De Verbo Dei, l. 4. c. 2.

g C. 12.

h "Cum enim ex divinis scripturis integram quis et firmam regulam veritatis susceperit."

i "Quibus sacris literis unica est credendi pariter et vivendi regula præscripta."

there already weighed. Which must imply the scripture alone to be that measure we are to trust to.

Dist. 8. c. 4—9. It is there said, "that custom must yield to truth and reason, when that is discovered, and that for this reason, because Christ said, *I am truth*, and not custom." Now if tradition be an infallible rule of faith, custom ought always to be presumed to have truth and reason of its side. For if we can once suppose a custom to prevail in the church against truth and reason, it is impossible that tradition should be infallible; for what is that but ancient custom?

Caus. 11. q. 3. c. 101. *Si is qui præest;* "If any one commands what God hath forbidden, or forbids what God hath commanded, he is to be accursed of all that love God. And if he requires any thing besides the will of God, or what God hath evidently required in scripture, he is to be looked on as a false witness of God, and a sacrilegious person." How can this be, if there be another infallible way of conveying the will of God besides the scriptures?

Caus. 24. q. 3. c. 30. c. *Quid autem;* "In matters of doubt, it is said, that men are to fly to the written word for satisfaction, and that it is folly not to do it[k]." It is true, men's own fancies are opposed to scripture, but against men's fancies no other rule is mentioned but that of the written word.

Joh. 22. *Extravag.* c. *Quia quorundam*, tit. 14. makes his appeal to scripture in the controversy then on foot about use and property; *Dicant nobis ubi legunt*, &c. and he shews[l], "that if it were a matter of faith, it must be contained in scripture, either expressly or by deduction, otherwise the scripture would be no certain rule; and by consequence, the articles of faith which are proved by scripture would be rendered doubtful and uncertain."

The Glosser there saith, "Whence comes this consequence?" and refers to another place, where he makes it out thus; "That faith can only be proved by the scripture, and therefore if the authority of that be destroyed, faith would be

[k] "Sed in hanc insipientiam eadunt, qui cum ad cognoscendam veritatem aliquo impediuntur obscuro, non ad prophéticas voces, non ad apostolicas literas, nec ad evangelicas auctoritates, sed ad seipsos recurrunt."

[l] "Nec quasi hoc sacra scriptura contineat, quo negato tota scriptura sacra redditur dubia; et per consequens articuli fidei, qui habent per scripturam sacram probari, redduntur dubii et incerti."

taken away [m]." The Roman editors, for an antidote, refer to cardinal Turrecremata [n], who doth indeed speak of catholic truths, which are not to be found in the canon of scripture; and he quotes a passage in the canon law for it, under the name of Alex. 3. c. *cum Marthæ*, *Extrav. de Celebr. Missæ*, but in truth it is Innoc. 3. Decretal. l. 3. tit. 41. and yet this will not prove what he aims at; for the question was about the author of the words added in the eucharist to those of Christ's institution; and he pleads that many of Christ's words and actions are omitted by the evangelists, which the apostles afterwards set down; and he instances in St. Paul, as to those words of Christ, *It is more blessed to give than to receive;* and elsewhere. But what is all this to catholic truths not being contained in scripture, either in words or by consequence? The cardinal was here very much to seek, when he had nothing but such a testimony as this to produce in so weighty and so new a doctrine. The best argument he produces [o] is a horrible blunder of Gratian's, where St. Augustin seems to reckon the Decretal Epistles equal with the scriptures, Dist. 19. c. *in Canonicis*, which the Roman correctors were ashamed of, and confess that St. Augustin speaks only of canonical epistles in scripture. So hard must they strain, who among Christians would set up any other rule equal with the written word.

4. I proceed to prove this from the ancient offices of the Roman church.

In the office produced by Morinus [p] out of the Vatican MS. which he saith was very ancient, the bishop, before his consecration, was asked, "if he would accommodate all his prudence, to the best of his skill, to the sense of holy scripture?"

Resp. "Yes, I will with all my heart consent, and obey it in all things."

Inter. "Wilt thou teach the people by word and example the things which thou learnest out of holy scriptures?"

Resp. "I will."

And then immediately follows the *examen* about manners.

m Extrav. Joh. 22. Cum inter Gloss. per consequens.

n Turrecrem. de Ecclesia, l. 4. part. 2. c. 9.

o Turrecrem. l. 2. c. 18.

p Morin. de Ordinat. Sacris, p. 275.

In another old office of St. Victor's[q], there are the same questions in the same manner.

And so in another of the church of Rouen, lately produced by Mabillon[r], which he saith was about William the Conqueror's time, there is not a word about traditions, which crept into the *Ordo Romanus*, and from thence hath been continued in the Roman pontificals. But it is observable, that the *Ordo Romanus* owns that the *examen* was originally taken out of the Gallican offices, (although it does not appear in those imperfect ones lately published at Rome by Thomasius,) and therefore we may justly suspect that the additional questions about traditions were the Roman interpolations, after it came to be used in that pontifical.

And the first office in Morinus, was the true ancient Gallican office. But if tradition had been then owned as a rule of faith, it ought no more to have been omitted in the ancient offices than in the modern.

And the ancient writers about ecclesiastical offices speak very agreeably to the most ancient offices about this matter. Amalarius saith[s], "the gospel is the fountain of wisdom, and that the preachers ought to prove the evangelical truth out of the sacred books." Isidore[t], "that we ought to think nothing" (as to matters of faith) "but what is contained in the two testaments." Rabanus Maurus[u], "that the knowledge of the scriptures is the foundation and perfection of prudence. That truth and wisdom are to be tried by them; and the perfect instruction of life is contained in them." Our venerable Bede[x] agrees with them, when he saith, "that the true teachers take out of the scriptures of the Old and New Testament that which they preach; and therefore have their minds employed in finding out the true meaning of them."

5. I now come to the Fathers[y], wherein I am in great measure prevented by a late discourse, wherein it is at large shewed, that the Fathers made use of no other rule but the scriptures for deciding controversies; therefore I shall take another method, which is to shew, that those who do speak

[q] Morin. p. 333.
[r] Mabillon Analect. tom. 2. p. 468.
[s] Amalarius de Offciis, l. 3. c. 5.
[t] Isidor. de Offic. l. 2. c. 23.
[u] Rab. Maur. de Inst. Cler. l. 3. c. 2. l. 2. c. 53.
[x] Bed. in Cant. l. 5. De Tabernaculo, l. 1. c. 6.
[y] Vindic. of the Answ. to some late Papers.

most advantageously of tradition, did not intend to set up another rule of faith distinct from scripture.

And here I shall pass over all those testimonies of Fathers which speak either of tradition before the canon of scripture, or to those who did not receive it, or of the tradition of scripture itself, or of some rites and customs of the church, as wholly impertinent. And when these are cut off, there remain scarce any to be considered, besides that of Vincentius Lirinensis, and one testimony of St. Basil.

I begin with Vincentius Lirinensis, who by some is thought so great a favourer of tradition; but he saith not a word of it as a rule of faith distinct from scripture; for he asserts the "canon of scripture to be sufficient of itself for all things [z]." How can that be, if tradition be a rule of faith distinct from it? He makes, indeed, catholic tradition the best interpreter of scripture; and we have no reason to decline it in the points in dispute between us, if Vincentius his rules be followed.

1. If antiquity, universality, and consent be joined.

2. If the difference be observed between old errors and new ones. For, saith he [a], when they have had length of time, truth is more easily concealed by those who are concerned to suppress it. And in those cases, we have no other way to deal with them but by scripture and ancient councils. And this is the rule we profess to hold to.

But to suppose any one part of the church to assume to itself the title of *catholic*, and then to determine what is to be held for catholic tradition by all members of the catholic church, is a thing in itself unreasonable, and leaves that part under an impossibility of being reclaimed. For in case the corrupt part be judge, we may be sure no corruptions will be ever owned. Vincentius grants [b] that Arianism had once extremely the advantage in point of universality, and had many councils of its side; if now the prevailing party be to judge of catholic tradition, and all are bound to submit to its decrees without further examination, as the auther [c] of the Guide in Controversies saith upon these rules of Vincentius; then I say all men were then bound to declare themselves Arians. For if "the guides of the present church are to be trusted and

[z] Commonit. 1. c. 2. Cum sit perfectus scripturarum canon, sibique ad omnia satis superque sufficiat.

[a] C. 39. [b] C. 6.

[c] Of the Necessity of Church Guides, p. 201.

relied upon for the doctrine of the apostolical church downwards;" how was it possible for any members of the church then to oppose Arianism, and to reform the church after its prevalency? To say "it was condemned by a former council[d]," doth by no means clear the difficulty; for "the present guides must be trusted," whether they were rightly condemned or not; and nothing can be more certain, than that they would be sure to condemn those who condemned them. But Vincentius saith, "Every true lover of Christ preferred the ancient faith before the novel betraying of it;" but then he must choose this ancient faith against the judgment of the present guides of the church. And therefore that, according to Vincentius, can be no infallible rule of faith.

But whether the present universality dissents from antiquity, whose judgment should be sooner taken than its own? saith the same author. This had been an excellent argument in the mouth of Ursacius or Valens at the council of Ariminum; and I do not see what answer the Guide in Controversies could have made. But both are parties, and is not the council's judgment to be taken rather than a few opposers? so that, for all that I can find by these principles, Arianism having the greater number, had hard luck not to be established as the catholic faith. But if in that case particular persons were to judge between the new and the old faith, then the same reason will still hold, unless the guides of the church have obtained a new patent of infallibility since that time.

The great question among us is, where the true ancient faith is; and how we may come to find it out? We are willing to follow the ancient rules in this matter. The scripture is allowed to be an infallible rule on all hands; and I am proving that tradition was not allowed in the ancient church, as distinct from it. But the present question is, how far tradition is to be allowed in giving the sense of scripture between us. Vincentius saith, "we ought to follow it when there is antiquity, universality, and consent:" this we are willing to be tried by. But here comes another question, Who is to be judge of these? "The present guides of the catholic church?" To what purpose then are all those rules? Will they condemn themselves? or, as the Guide admirably saith[e], "If the pre-

[d] P. 199. [e] Ibid.

sent universality be its own judge, when can we think it will witness its departure from the true faith?" And if it will not, what a case is the church in under such a pretended universality?

The utmost use I can suppose then Vincentius his rules can be of to us now, is in that case which he puts when corruptions and errors have had time to take root and fasten themselves; and that is, "by an appeal to scripture and ancient councils." But because of the charge of innovation upon us, we are content to be tried by his second rule. "By the consent of the Fathers of greatest reputation, who are agreed on all hands to have lived and died in the communion of the catholic church: and what they delivered freely, constantly, and unanimously, let that be taken for the undoubted and certain rule in judging between us." But "if the present guides must come in to be judges here again," then all our labour is lost, and Vincentius his rules signify just nothing.

The testimony of St. Basil is, by Mr. White, magnified above the rest[f], and that out of his book *De Spiritu Sancto*, above all others, to prove that the certainty of faith depends on tradition, and not merely on scripture. The force of it is said to lie in this, "that the practice of the church, in saying, With the Holy Spirit, though not found in scripture, is to determine the sense of the article of faith about the divinity of the Holy Ghost." But to clear this place, we are to observe,

1. That St. Basil doth not insist on tradition for the proof of this article of faith, for he expressly disowns it in that book; "It is not enough," saith he[g], "that we have it by tradition from our fathers; for our fathers had it from the will of God in scripture, as appears by those testimonies I have set down already, which they took for their foundations." Nothing can be plainer, than that St. Basil made scripture alone the foundation of faith as to this point. And no one, upon all occasions, speaks more expressly than he doth, as to the sufficiency of scripture for a rule of faith[h]; and he was too great and too wise a man to contradict himself.

[f] Tabulæ Suffragial, p. 54.

[g] Ἀλλ' οὐ τοῦτο ἡμῖν ἐξαρκεῖ, ὅτι τῶν πατέρων ἡ παράδοσις, κακεῖνοι γὰρ τῷ βουλήματι τῆς γραφῆς ἠκολούθησαν, ἐκ τῶν μαρτυριῶν, ἃς μικρῳπρόσθεν ὑμῖν ἐκ τῆς γραφῆς παρεθάμεθα, τὰς ἀρχὰς λαβόντες. De Sp. Sancto, c. 7.

[h] De Vera Fide, p. 386. A. C. p. 391. C.

2. That there were different forms of speech used in the church concerning the Holy Ghost [l], some taken out of scripture, and others received by tradition from the Fathers [k]. When he proves the divinity of the Holy Ghost, he appeals to scripture, and declares that he would neither think nor speak otherwise than he found there [l]. But it was objected, that the form St. Basil used was not found in scripture [m]; he answers, that the equivalent is there found; and that there were some things received by tradition which had the same force towards piety. And if we take away all unwritten customs, we shall do wrong to the gospel, and leave a bare name to the public preaching. And from thence he insists on some traditionary rites, as the sign of the cross, praying towards the east, &c. His business is to shew, that to the greater solemnity of Christian worship, several customs were observed in the church, which are not to be found in scripture. And if other ancient customs were received, which are not commanded in scripture [n], he sees no reason that they should find such fault with this. And this is the whole force of St. Basil's reasoning, which can never be stretched to the setting up tradition as a rule of faith distinct from scripture.

Having thus shewed that there was no catholic tradition for this new rule of faith, I am now to give an account how it came into the church.

The first step that was made towards it was by the second council of Nice. For, although the emperor, in the synodical epistle, proposed to them the true ancient method of judging in councils, "by the books of scripture placed on a throne in the middle of the council;" yet they found they could by no means do their business that way; and therefore, as Bellarmine observes, they set up tradition in the 6th and 7th sessions, and pronounced anathemas against those who rejected unwritten traditions. But although there were then almost as little pretence for tradition as scripture in the matter of images [o]; yet there having been a practice among them, to set up and to worship images, (which Richerius thinks came first into the church from the reverence shewed to the emperor's

l Ascet. Reg. 26. Reg. Sho. c. 22.
k De Sp. Sanct. c. 9.
l C. 10.
m C. 21.
n C. 29.
o Richer. Hist. Conc. General. l. 1. c. 11. n. 13.

statues,) they thought this the securest way to advance that which they could never defend by scripture.

But this prevailed very little in the western church, as is well known by the rejection of that synod; however, pope Hadrian joined with them, and produced a wretched tradition about Sylvester and Constantine, to justify their proceedings; as appears by the acts of that council. And from the time that images were received at Rome, the force of tradition was magnified; and by degrees it came to be made use of to justify other practices, for which they had nothing else to plead.

Hitherto tradition was made use of for matters of practice, and the scripture was generally received as the rule of faith; but some of the schoolmen found it impossible to defend some doctrines held in the church of Rome by mere scripture, and therefore they were forced to call in the help of tradition. The most remarkable of these was Scotus, who, although in his prologue he asserted, as is said already, "that the scripture did sufficiently contain all things necessary to salvation;" yet when he came to particular points, he found scripture alone would never do their business. And especially as to the sacraments of the church, about which he saw the church of Rome then held many things which could never be proved from thence [p]. And this was the true occasion of traditions being taken in for a partial rule.

For after the council of Lateran had declared several things to be of faith, which were in no former creeds, as Scotus confesses [q], and they were bound to defend them as points of faith, the men of wit and subtlety, such as Scotus was, were very hard put to it, to find out ways to prove those to have been old points of faith, which they knew to be very new. Then they betook themselves to two things, which would serve for a colour to blind the common people; and those were,

1. That it was true, these things were not in scripture; but "Christ said to his disciples, I have many things to say unto you," &c. and among those many things, they were to believe these new doctrines to be some.

2. When this would not serve, then they told them, though these doctrines were not explicitly in scripture, yet they were implicitly there; and the church had authority to fetch them

[p] Scot. in l. 1. Sent. Dist. 11. [q] L. 4. Dist. 11. n. 15.

out of those dark places, and to set them in a better light. And thus Scotus helped himself out in that dark point of transubstantiation[r]. First, he attempts to make it out by tradition; but finding that would not do the business effectually, he runs to the authority of the church, especially in the business of sacraments, and "we are to suppose," saith he, "that the church doth expound the scriptures with the same Spirit which indited them." This was a brave supposition indeed, but he offers no proof of it.

If we allow Scotus to have been the introducer of tradition, as to some points of faith, yet I have made it appear that his doctrine was not received in the schools. But after the council of Constance had declared several propositions to be heretical, which could not be condemned by scripture, there was found a necessity of holding that there were catholic truths not contained in scripture. The first proposition there condemned was, "that the substance of bread and wine remains in the sacrament of the altar:" the second, "that the accidents do not remain without their subject:" now how could such as these be condemned by scripture? But although only some were said to be heretical, yet all were said to be against catholic truth. But where is this catholic truth to be found? Cardinal Cusanus thought of a current sense of scripture[s], according to the church's occasions; so that though the church's practice should be directly contrary, yet the scripture was to be understood as the church practised. This was a very plain and effectual way, if it had not been too gross, and therefore it was thought much better by cardinal Turrecremata, to found catholic verities on unwritten tradition, as well as on scripture.

After this, Leo X. in his famous bull against Luther, *Exurge Domine*, made a further step; for the twenty-second proposition condemned therein is, "that it is certain that it is not in the power of the church or pope to appoint new articles of faith." It seems then the pope or church have a power to constitute new articles of faith; and then neither scripture nor

r N. 13.

s Scripturas esse ad tempus adaptatas et varie intellectas, ita ut uno tempore secundum currentem universalem ritum exponerentur, mutato ritu iterum sententia mutaretur. Cusan. ad Bohem. Epist. 2.

tradition can be the certain rule of faith, but the present church or pope.

This had put an end to the business, if it would have taken; but the world being wiser, and the errors and corruptions complained of not being to be defended by scripture, tradition was pitched upon as a secure way; and accordingly several attempts were made towards the setting of it up by some provincial councils, before that of Trent. So in the council of Sens 1527, can. 53, it is declared to be a pernicious error to receive nothing but what is deduced from scripture, because Christ delivered many things to his apostles which were never written. But not one thing is alleged as a matter of faith so conveyed, but only some rites about sacraments and prayer; and yet he is declared a heretic as well as schismatic who rejects them. Indeed the Apostles' Creed is mentioned, but not as to the articles contained in it, but as to the authors of it. But what is there in all this that makes a man guilty of heresy?

Jod. Clicthoveus, a doctor of Paris, the next year wrote an explication and defence of this council, but he mistakes the point; for he runs upon it as if it were, "whether all things to be believed and observed in the church were to be expressly set down in scripture?" whereas a just consequence out of it is sufficient. And the greatest strength of what he saith to the purpose is, "that the other opinion was condemned in the council of Constance."

And from no better a tradition than this did the council of Trent declare the unwritten word to be a rule of faith equal with the scriptures.

II. About the canon of scripture defined by the council of Trent.

This is declared by the council of Trent, sess. 4, "and therein the books of Tobias, Judith, Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus, Maccabees, and Baruch, are received for canonical, with the twenty-two books in the Hebrew canon," and an anathema is denounced against those who do not. And presently he adds, "that hereby the world might see what authorities the council proceeded on for confirming matters of faith, as well as reforming manners."

Now to shew that there was no catholic tradition for the ground of this decree, we are to observe,

1. That these canonical books are not so called in a large sense for such as have been used or read in the church; but in the strict sense for such as are a good foundation to build matters of faith upon.

2. That these books were not so received by all, even in the council of Trent. For what is received by virtue of a catholic tradition must be universally received by the members of it. But that so it was not, appears by the account given by both the historians [t]. F. Paul saith, "that in the congregation there were two different opinions of those who were for a particular catalogue; one was to distinguish the books into three parts, the other to make all the books of equal authority; and that this latter was carried by the greater number." Now if this were a catholic tradition, how was it possible for the Fathers of the council to divide about it? And cardinal Pallavicini himself saith [u], "that Bertanus and Seripandus propounded the putting the books into several classes, some to be read for piety, and others to confirm doctrines of faith; and that cardinal Seripando wrote a most learned book to that purpose." What! against a catholic tradition? It seems he was far from believing it to be so. And he confesses [x], "that when they came to the anathema, the legates and twenty Fathers were for it; Madrucci and fourteen were against it, because some catholics were of another opinion." Then certainly they knew no catholic tradition for it.

Among these cardinal Cajetan is mentioned, "who was," saith Pallavicini, "severely rebuked for it by Melchior Canus;" but what is that to the tradition of the church? Canus doth indeed appeal to the council of Carthage [y], Innocentius I, and the council of Florence; but this doth not make up a catholic tradition against Cajetan [z], who declares that he follows St. Jerome, who cast those books out of the canon, with respect to faith. And he answers the arguments brought on the other side, by this distinction, that they are "canonical for edifica-

[t] Hist. of the Council of Trent, l. 2. p. 154.
[u] Ibid. l. 6. c. 11. p. 4.
[x] P. 8.
[y] Can. Loc. Theol. l. 2. c. 11.
[z] Cajet. in Eccles. fine.

tion, but not for faith [a]." If therefore Canus would have confuted Cajetan, he ought to have proved that they were owned for canonical in the latter sense. Cajetan, in his epistle to Clemens VII, before the historical books, owns the great obligation of the church to St. Jerome, for distinguishing canonical and apocryphal books; and saith, "that he hath freed it from the reproach of the Jews, who said the Christians made canonical books of the Old Testament, which they knew nothing of." And this was an argument of great consequence; but Canus takes no notice of it, and it fully answers his objection, "that men could not know what books were truly canonical," viz. such as were of "Divine inspiration, and so received by the Jews." Catharinus saith, in answer to Cajetan [b], "that the Jews had one canon, and the church another." But how comes the canon to be received as of Divine inspiration, which was not so received among the Jews? This were to resolve all into the church's inspiration, and not into tradition.

Bellarmine grants [c], "that the church can by no means make a book canonical which is not so, but only declare what is canonical; and that, not at pleasure, but from ancient testimonies, from similitude of style with books uncontroverted, and the general sense and taste of Christian people." Now the case here relates to books not first written to Christians, but among the Jews, from whom we receive the oracles of God committed to them. And if the Jews never believed these books to contain the oracles of God in them, how can the Christian church embrace them for such, unless it assumes a power to make, and not merely to declare canonical books? For he grants we have no testimony of the Jews for them.

But Catharinus himself cannot deny that St. Jerome saith, "that although the church reads those books, yet it doth not receive them for canonical scriptures." And he makes a pitiful answer to it. For he confesses, "that the church taken for the body of the faithful did not receive them; but as taken for the governors it did." But others grant that they did receive them no more than the people [d]; and as to the other,

[a] Ad Esther, c. 10. ad fin.
[b] Annot. in Cajet. l. 1. p. 37.
[c] De Verb. Dei, l. 1. c. 11.
[d] Jul. Ruger. de libris Canonicis, p. 80.

the cause of tradition is plainly given up. And in truth, he resolves all at last into the opinion of the popes Innocentius, Gelasius, and Eugenius IV. But we are obliged to him for letting us know the secret of so much zeal for these apocryphal books [e], viz. "that they are of great force against the heretics; for purgatory is nowhere so expressly mentioned as in the Maccabees." If it had not been for this, St. Jerome and Cajetan might have escaped censure, and the Jewish canon had been sufficient.

But to shew that there hath been no catholic tradition about the Tridentine canon, I shall prove these two things:

1. That there hath been a constant tradition against it in the eastern church.

2. That there never was a constant tradition for it in the western church.

1. That there hath been a constant tradition against it in the eastern church, which received the Jewish canon, without the books declared canonical by the council of Trent. We have very early evidence of this in the testimony of Melito, bishop of Sardis, who lived not long after the middle of the second century, and made it his business to inquire into this matter, and he delivers but twenty-two books of the Old Testament. The same is done by Origen in the next, who took infinite pains, as Eusebius [f] saith, in searching after the copies of the Old Testament. And these testimonies are preserved by Eusebius [g] in the following century; and himself declares, "that there was no sacred book among the Jews from the time of Zorobabel [h];" which cuts off the books canonized by the council of Trent. In the same age we have the testimonies of Athanasius [i], St. Cyril of Jerusalem, Epiphanius, St. Basil, St. Gregory Nazianzene, Amphilochius, and St. Chrysostom: it is not to be imagined that a tradition should be better attested in one age than this was, by so considerable men in different churches, who gave in the testimony of all those churches they belonged to. And yet besides these we have in that age

[e] P. 41.

[f] Euseb. l. 4. c. 25. l. 6. c. 25. Philocal. c. 3.

[g] Euseb. Demonstr. l. 8. p. 368.

[h] Chronic. Gr. p. 172.

[i] Athanas. Ep. 39. Cyril. Catech. 4. Epiph. de mensuris et ponder. Basil. in Origen. Philocal. Greg. Nazianzen. in Carm. Amph. in Canon. Ep. apud Balsam. St. Chrysost. in Gen. hom. 4.

a concurrent testimony of a council of bishops at Laodicea [k], from several provinces of Asia; and, which is yet more, this canon of theirs was received into the code of the catholic church, and so owned by the council of Chalcedon, which, by its first canon, gives authority to it. And Justinian allows the force of laws to the canons which were either made or confirmed by the four general councils. But it is the point of tradition I am upon, and therefore Justinian's Novel [l] may at least be a strong evidence of that in the sixth century. In the seventh, Leontius [m] gives his own testimony and that of Theodorus. In the eighth, Damascen expressly owns the Hebrew canon of twenty-two books, and excludes by name some of the books made canonical at Trent. In the ninth, we have the testimony of Nicephorus [n], patriarch of Constantinople, if he be the author of the Laterculus, at the end of his Chronography; but if he be not, he must be an author of that age, being translated by Anastasius Bibliothecarius[o]. In the twelfth, Balsamon and Zonaras refer to the council of Laodicea and the Greek Fathers. In the fourteenth, Nicephorus Callistus reckons but twenty-two books of the Old Testament. And in this age we have the clear testimony of Metrophanes, (afterwards patriarch of Alexandria,) who saith, there are but twenty-two canonical books of the Old Testament; but the rest, i. e. Tobit, Judith, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, and Maccabees, are useful, and therefore not wholly to be rejected, but the church never received them for canonical and authentical, as appears by many testimonies, as, among others, of Gregory the divine, Amphilochius and Damascen, and therefore we never prove matters of faith out of them.

2. Let us now compare this tradition with that of the western church, for the new canon of Trent. It cannot be denied that Innocentius I. and Gelasius did enlarge the canon, and took in the apocryphal books; (unless we call in question the writings under their names;) but granting them genuine, I shall shew that there is no comparison between this tradition and that of the eastern church, and therefore there

[k] Conc. Laodicen. c. 59.
[l] Novel. 131.
[m] Leont. de Sectis Act. 2. Damascen. de Fide, l. 4. c. 18.
[n] Niceph. Chronogr. p. 419.
[o] Anastas. Hist. p. 189. Not. in Can. 27. Carthag. Niceph. in Epigram. Metroph. Confess. c. 7. p. 82. Phil. Cyprii Chronic. Eccles. Græc. p. 459.

could be no possible reason for the council of Trent to make a decree for this tradition, and to anathematize all who did not submit to it. For,

1. This tradition was not universally received at that time. Innocentius his Epistle is supposed to be written A. D. 405. Was the western church agreed before or after about this matter? This Epistle was written to Exuperius, a Gallican bishop, (to whom St. Jerome dedicated his Commentaries on Zechariah,) but now it unluckily falls out, that the tradition of the Gallican church was contrary to this, as appears by St. Hilary[p], (who could not be ignorant of it, being a famous bishop of that church,) and he tells us, "there were but twenty-two canonical books of the Old Testament." "I confess," he saith, "some were for adding Tobit and Judith," but it is very observable that he saith, "that the other account is most agreeable to ancient tradition," which is a mighty argument against Innocentius, who brings no tradition to justify his canon. When St. Augustin produced a place out of the Book of Wisdom[q], the divines of Marseilles rejected it, because the book was not canonical: therefore in that time Innocent's canon was by no means received in the Gallican church; for by it this book was made canonical. But St. Jerome, who had as much learning as pope Innocent[r], vehemently opposed this new canon, more than once or ten times; and not only speaks of the Jewish canon, but of the canon of the church. "The church," saith he, "reads the Books of Tobit, Judith, and Maccabees, but the church doth not receive them among canonical scriptures." What church doth he mean? Not the synagogue certainly. Pope Innocent saith, "those books are to be received into the canon;" St. Jerome saith, "the church doth not receive them, but that they are to be cast out:" where is the certainty of tradition to be found? If Innocent were in the right, St. Jerome was foully mistaken, and in plain terms belied the church. But how is this consistent with the saintship of St. Jerome? or with common discretion, if the church did receive those books for canonical? for every one could have disproved him. And it required no great judgment or deep learning to know what books were received, and what not.

[p] Hilar. Prolog. in Psalm.
[q] De Prædest. Sanctor. c. 14.
[r] Prolog. Gal. Prolog. in lib. Salom. ad Paul. et Eust. ad Chromat.

If St. Jerome were so mistaken, (which it is very hard to believe,) how came Ruffinus not to observe his errors and opposition to the church? Nay, how came Ruffinus himself to fall into the very same prodigious mistake? For he not only rejects the controverted books out of the canon, but saith, "he followed the ancient tradition therein[s]." What account can be given of this matter? If Innocent's tradition were right, these men were under a gross delusion; and yet they were learned and knowing persons, and more than ordinarily conversant in the doctrines and traditions of the church.

2. This opinion was not received as a tradition of the church afterwards: for if it had been, how could Gregory I.[t] reject the Book of Maccabees out of the canon, when two of his predecessors took it in? It is somewhat hard to suppose one pope to contradict two of his predecessors about the canon of scripture; yet I see not how to avoid it; nor how it is consistent with the constancy of tradition, much less with the pretence to infallibility. He did not merely doubt, as Canus[u] would have it thought, but he plainly excludes them out of the canon. Catharinus thinks he followed St. Jerome. What then? Doth this exclude his contradicting his predecessors? or was St. Jerome's judgment above the pope's? But it was not St. Gregory alone who contradicted the former pope's canon; for it was not received either in Italy, Spain, France, Germany, or England; and yet, no doubt, it was a very catholic tradition.

Not in Italy; for there Cassiodore[v], a learned and devout man in the next century to them, gives an account of the canon of scripture, and he takes not any notice either of Innocent or Gelasius. He first sets down the order of scripture according to St. Jerome; and then according to St. Augustin; and in the last place, according to the old translation and the LXX; and where himself speaks of the apocryphal books before, he follows St. Jerome's opinion, "that they were written rather for manners than doctrine." He confesses there was a difference about the canon; but he goes about to excuse it.

[s] Ruffin. in Symbol. p. 188, 189.

[t] Greg. Moral. in Jo. lib. 19. cap. 17.

[u] Can. Loc. Theol. l. 2. c. 11. ad 4. Cath. de Canonicis Scrip. in Opuscul. p. 302.

[v] Cassiodor. de Instit. Divin. liter. c. 12, 13, 14. c. 6.

But what need that, if there were a catholic tradition then in the church concerning it, and that enforced by two popes?

But it may yet seem stranger, that even in Italy, one canonized for a saint by Clemens VII. should follow St. Jerome's opinion in this matter, viz. St. Antoninus[x], bishop of Florence: who speaking of Ecclesiasticus received into the canon of the two popes, he saith, "It is only received by the church to be read, and is not authentic to prove any thing in matters of faith." He that writes notes upon him saith, "that he follows St. Jerome, and must be understood of the eastern church; for the western church always received these books into the canon." But he speaks not one word of the eastern church; and by the church, he could understand nothing but what he accounted the catholic church. Canus[y] allows Antoninus to have rejected these books; but he thinks the matter not so clear, but that they might doubt concerning it. Then there was no such evidence of tradition to convince men. But Antoninus hath preserved the judgment of a greater man concerning these books[z], even Thomas Aquinas, who in 2. 2dæ, he saith, "denied these books to have such authority as to prove any matter of faith by them:" which is directly contrary to the council of Trent. If this passage be not now to be found in him, we know whom to blame for it. If Antoninus saw it there, we hope his word may be taken for it.

In Spain, we have for the Hebrew canon the testimonies of Paulus Burgensis[a], Tostatus[b], and cardinal Ximenes[c].

In France, of Victorinus, Agobardus, Radulphus Flaviacensis, Petrus Cluniacensis, Hugo de S. Victore, and Richard de S. Victore, Lyra, and others.

In Germany, of Rabanus Maurus, Strabo, Rupertus, Hermannus Contractus, and others.

In England, of Bede, Alcuin, Sarisburiensis, Ockam, Waldensis, and others: whom I barely mention, because their testimonies are at large in bishop Cosins his Scholastical History of the Canon of Scripture, and no man hath yet had the hardiness to undertake that book.

x St. Antonin. Sum. Hist. p. 1. tit. 3. c. 4.
y Can. Loc. Theol. l. 2. c. 11.
z Part. 3. tit. 18. c. 6. sect. 2, et 3.
a Bur. in Addit. ad Lyram ad c. 1. Esther. et 7.
b Tostat. in Matt. Præf. q. 1, 2.
c Xim. Præf. ad Bib. Comp.

These, I think, are sufficient to shew there was no catholic tradition for the decree of the council of Trent about the canon of scripture.

I now proceed to shew on what pretences and colours it came in, and by what degrees and steps it advanced.

1. The first step was, the esteem which some of the Fathers expressed of these books, in quoting of passages out of them. We do not deny that the Fathers did frequently cite them; even those who expressly rejected them from being canonical, and not as ordinary books, but as such as were useful to the church, wherein many wise sayings and good actions are recorded. But the many quotations the Fathers do make out of them is the only plausible pretence which those of the church of Rome have to defend the putting them into the canon, as appears by Bellarmine and others. The Book of Tobit, they tell us, is mentioned by St. Cyprian, St. Ambrose, St. Basil, and St. Augustin. Of Judith, by St. Jerome, who mentions a tradition, that it was allowed in the council of Nice; but certainly St. Jerome never believed it, when he declares it to be apocryphal, and not sufficient to prove any matter of faith. The Book of Wisdom, by St. Cyprian, St. Cyril, and St. Augustin. Ecclesiasticus, by Clemens Alexandrinus, St. Cyprian, Epiphanius, St. Ambrose, and St. Augustin. The Maccabees, by Tertullian, Cyprian, Clemens Alexandrinus, Origen, Eusebius, St. Ambrose, St. Augustin. But all these testimonies only prove that they thought something in those books worth alleging, but not that they judged the books themselves canonical. And better arguments from their citations might be brought for the books of the Sibyls, than for any of these. We are not then to judge of their opinion of canonical books by bare citations, but by their declared judgments about them.

2. The next step was, when they came to be read in churches; but about this there was no certain rule. For the councils of Laodicea and Carthage differed chiefly upon this point. The former decreed, "that none but canonical scripture should be read under the name of *holy writings*;" and sets down the names of the canonical books then to be read, (and so leaves out the Apocalypse.) The latter, from their being read, inferred their being canonical; for it agrees with the other, that

none but canonical should be read, and because these were read it reckons them up with the canonical books; for so the canon concludes, "We have received from our fathers, that these books are to be read in churches."

But the council of Carthage was not peremptory in this matter; but desired "it might be referred to Boniface, and other bishops beyond the seas:" which shews, that here was no decree absolutely made, nor any certainty of tradition; for then, to what purpose should they send to other churches to advise about it?

3. When they came to be distinguished from apocryphal writings. Whence those who do not consider the reason of it, conclude them to have been canonical. But sometimes *apocryphal* signifies such books as were not in the canon of faith, as in the authors before mentioned; sometimes such books which were not allowed to be used among Christians. This distinction we have in Ruffinus, who saith there are three sorts of books; canonical, as the twenty-two of the Old Testament; ecclesiastical, of which sort he reckons Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, Tobit, Judith, and Maccabees, and these, he saith, "were permitted to be read in churches," but no argument could be brought out of them for matter of faith; apocryphal are such, which by no means were permitted to be read. And thus Innocentius his words may well be understood: for he concludes with saying, "that other writings were not only to be rejected, but to be condemned." And so his meaning is to distinguish them from such counterfeit Divine writings as were then abroad. For these were not to be wholly rejected, and in that large sense he admits them into the canon, taking ecclesiastical writings which were read in churches into that number. And in this sense St. Augustin used the word *apocryphal*, when the Book of Enoch is so called by him [d], and such other counterfeit writings under the names of the prophets and apostles; but elsewhere he distinguishes between the canonical books of Salomon, and those which bare his name; which, he saith, "the more learned know not to be his, but the western church had of old owned their authority." But in the case of the Book of Enoch, he appeals to the

[d] Aug. de Civ. Dei, l. 15. c. 23. l. 17. c. 20.

canon which was kept in the Jewish temple, and so falls in with St. Jerome; and he confesses it is hard to justify the authority of those which are not in the Hebrew canon. Of the Maccabees he saith [e], "It is distinguished from the writings called *canonical*; but it is received by the church as such [e]." What! to confirm matters of faith? No, but "for the glorious sufferings therein recorded;" and elsewhere he saith [f], "It is useful, if it be soberly read." St. Augustin knew very well that all books were not received alike; and that many were received in some parts of the western church from the old translation out of the LXX, which were not received in the eastern; and therefore in his books of Christian Doctrine [g], he gives rules in judging of canonical books; to follow the authority of the greatest number of catholic churches, especially the apostolical; and that those which were received by all, should be preferred before those which were only received by some. But he very well knew that the Hebrew canon was universally received, and that the controverted books were not; and therefore, according to his rule, these could never be of equal authority with the other.

4. When the Roman church declared that it received the controverted books into the canon. This is said to have been done by Gelasius, with his synod of seventy bishops, (and yet it is hard to understand how Gregory, so soon after, should contradict it.) The title of it in the old manuscript, produced by Chiffletius, and by him attributed to Hormisdas, is, "The order of the Old Testament which the holy catholic Roman church receives and honours, is this [h]." But whether by Gelasius or Hormisdas, I cannot understand why such a decree as this should not be put into the whole Roman code of canons, if it had been then made. That there was such a one, appears by the copies of it in the Vatican, mentioned by the Roman correctors of Gratian, and by mention of it by the canon *Si Romanorum*, dist. 19, and *De Libellis*, dist. 20, and by the latter we understand what canons of councils and decrees of popes are in it, among whom are both Gelasius and Hormisdas. This they agree to be the same with that published by Wendelstin at Mentz, 1525. The epistle of Inno-

[e] Aug. de Civ. Dei, l. 18. c. 36.
[f] C. Gaudent, c. 29.
[g] De Doctr. l. 3. c. 8.
[h] Not. in Vigil. Taps. p. 150.

centius to Exuperius, with the canon, is there published, but not the other; and so is the canon of the council of Carthage, but that of Laodicea is cut off; and so they are in that published by Dionysius Exiguus and Quesnell, (Justellus, his ancient copy was imperfect there,) but both these canons being in the Roman code are an argument to me that the controverted books were received by the Roman church at that time; but in such a manner, that St. Jerome's prologues still stood in the vulgar Latin Bible, with the commentaries of Lyra, and additions of Burgensis, which were stiff for the Hebrew canon; and St. Jerome's authority prevailed more than the pope's, as appears fully by what hath been already produced.

5. To advance the authority of these books one step higher, Eugenius IV. declared them to be part of the canon in the instruction given to the Armenians. Which the Roman writers pretend to have been done in the council of Florence: but Naclantus, bishop of Chioza, in the council of Trent, as Pallavicini saith, "denied that any such decree was made by the council of Florence[1], because the last session of it ended 1439, and that decree was signed Feb. 4, 1441." To this the legate replied, "that this was a mistake occasioned by Abraham Cretensis, who published the Latin version of it, only till the Greek's departure; but the council continued three years longer, as appeared by the extracts of Augustinus Patritius," since published in the tomes of the councils. But he never mentions the canon of scripture; however, because Cervinus affirms that he saw the original signed by the pope and cardinals, we have no reason to dispute it. But then it appears how very little it signified, when Antoninus, the bishop of Florence, opposed it; and cardinal Ximenes and cardinal Cajetan slighted it, and all who embraced the council of Basil looked on Eugenius his decree as void; and after all, that very decree only joins the apocryphal books in the same canon as the council of Carthage had done; but it was reserved as the peculiar honour of the council of Trent, to declare that matters of faith might be proved out of them, as well as out of any canonical scriptures.

III. "About the free use of the scripture in the vulgar language, prohibited by the council of Trent."

[1] Hist. Concil. Trident. l. 6. c. 11. n. 12.

To understand the sense of the council of Trent in this matter, we must consider,

1. That it declares the vulgar Latin to be authentic; i. e. that no man under any pretence shall dare to presume to reject it. Suppose the pretence be, that it differs from the original; no matter for that, he must not reject that which the council hath declared authentic, i. e. among the Latin editions. But suppose a man finds other Latin translations truer in some parts, because they agree more with the original text, may he therein reject the vulgar Latin? By no means, if he thinks himself bound to adhere to the council of Trent. But the council supposes it to agree with the original. And we must believe the council therein. This is indeed the meaning of the council as far as I can judge. But what catholic tradition was there for this? Yes, for a thousand years after Gregory's time. But this is not antiquity enough to found a catholic tradition upon. If there were no more than a thousand from Gregory, there were six hundred past before him; so that there must be a more ancient tradition in the church, wherein this version was not authentic; and how came it then to be authentic by virtue of tradition? Here then tradition must be given up; and the council of Trent must have some other ground to go upon. For I think the traditionary men will not maintain the vulgar Latin to have been always authentic.

2. That it referred the making the index of prohibited books to the pope; and in the fourth rule of that index, "all persons are forbidden the use of the scripture in the vulgar tongue, without a particular license, and whosoever presumes to do it without a faculty, unless he first gives up his Bible, he is not to receive absolution."

My business is now to inquire what catholic tradition the pope and council went upon in this prohibition. But as to the testimony of Fathers, I am prevented by some late discourses on this subject. Instead thereof, therefore, I shall,

1. Shew from their own writers, that there could be no catholic tradition for such a prohibition.

2. Prove the general consent of the catholic church from public acts, as to the free use of the scripture.

Thomas Aquinas grants that the scripture was proposed to all, and in such a manner, that the most rude might under-

stand it [k]. Therefore there was no prohibition of such persons reading it.

Cajetan there uses two arguments for the scripture's using metaphors and similitudes. 1. Because God provides for all; 2. Because the scripture is tendered to all: and the common people are not capable of understanding spiritual things without such helps. If the scripture were intended for all, how comes a prohibition of the use of it?

Sixtus Senensis [l] grants, that in former times the scripture was translated into the vulgar languages, and the people did commonly read it to their great benefit. Then a prohibition of it must alter the church's practical tradition.

Alphonsus à Castro [m] yields to Erasmus, that the scriptures were of old translated into the vulgar tongues, and that the Fathers, such as St. Chrysostom and St. Jerome, persuaded people to the reading them. But the case is altered now, when such mischief comes by the reading the scriptures. And yet the tradition of the church continues the same, and is impossible to be changed.

Azorius [n] puts the case fairly; he grants that the scriptures were at first written and published in the common language; that St. Chrysostom admits all to read the scriptures; and that the people did so then; but they do not now. But he saith the people then understood Greek and Latin, and now they do not. If it were their own language, they might well understand it; but why should not the scripture now be in a language they may understand? For Greek and Latin did not make the common people one jot wiser or better; and yet this man calls it a heresy now, to say the scriptures ought to be translated into vulgar languages. How much is the faith of the church changed!

2. I am now to prove the general consent of the catholic church in this matter from public acts, i. e. that all parts of it have agreed in translations of scripture into vulgar languages, without any such prohibition.

If there had been any such thing in the primitive church, it would have held against the Latin translation itself. For I hope none will say it was the original, however authentic it be

[k] Sum. 1. q. 1. a. 9.
[l] Sixt. Senens. Biblioth. l. 6. n. 152.
[m] Alphons. à Castro, l. 1. c. 13.
[n] Azor. Instit. Moral. l. 8. c. 26.

made by the council of Trent. How then came the originals to be turned into the common language? (as I suppose Latin will be allowed to have been the common language of the Roman empire.) There is no objection can now be made against any modern translations, but would have held against the first Latin version. Who the author of it was is utterly unknown; and both St. Augustin[o] and St. Jerome say, "there was a great variety among the old translations, and every one translated as he thought fit." So that there was no restraint laid upon translating into the common language. And unless Latin were an infallible guide to those that understood it, the people were as liable to be deceived in it, as either in English or French.

But it was not only thus in the Roman empire, but wherever a people were converted to Christianity in all the elder times, the scripture was turned into their language[p]. The ecclesiastical historians mention the conversion of the Goths, and upon that the "translation of the Bible into their language by Ulphilas their bishop." Walfridus Strabo[q] adds to this, "that besides the Bible, they had all public offices of religion performed in their own language."

How soon the churches in Persia were planted it is impossible for us now to know; but in the MS. Ecclesiastical History of Abulpharagius, (in the hands of Dr. Loftus,) it is said, "that a disciple of Thaddæus preached the gospel in Persia, Assyria, and the parts thereabouts; and that by another disciple of his, 360 churches were settled there in his time; and that he came to Seleucia, the metropolis of the Persians, and there established a church, where he continued fifteen years." And from him there was a succession of the patriarchs of Seleucia, which continues still in the East; for upon the destruction thereof by Almansor, they removed first to Bagdad, and after that to Mozal over against Nineve, where their residence hath been since; and this patriarch had universal jurisdiction over the eastern churches, as far as the East Indies, as appears by Morinus his books of ordinations in the East, and the proceedings with the Christians of St. Thomas in the very end of the last century.

o Aug. de Doct. Christian. l. 2. c. 11. Hier. Præf. in Josuam.

p Socr. l. 4. c. 33. Soz. l. 6. c. 37. Nicephi. l. 11. c. 48. Isid. in Chron. Gothorum.

q Walaf. Strab. de Reb. Eccl. c. 7.

But we are certain from the Greek historians, that in Constantine's time the Christians in Persia were so numerous, that he wrote to the king of Persia on their behalf. Eusebius saith[r], that Constantine was informed, "that the churches were much increased there, and great multitudes were brought into Christ's flock[s];" and Constantine himself, in his letter to Sapores, saith, "the Christians flourished in the best parts of Persia, and he hoped they might continue so to do." But after Constantine's death, a terrible persecution befell them, wherein Sozomen saith[t], "the names of 16000 martyrs were preserved, besides an innumerable multitude of unknown persons." The sharpest part of the persecution fell upon the bishops and presbyters; especially in Adiabene[u], which was almost wholly Christian, which Ammianus Marcellinus saith[x] was the same with Assyria, wherein were Nineve, Ecbatane, Arbela, Gaugamela, Babylon, (or Seleucia,) and Ctesiphon, of which Sozomen saith[y], Symeon was then archbishop. And he names above twenty bishops who suffered besides, and one Mareabdes a chorepiscopus, with 250 of his clergy. After the time of Sapores, several sharp persecutions fell upon those churches in the times of Vararanes and Isdigerdes, of which the Greek historians take notice, and one of them, saith Theodoret[z], lasted thirty years. This I mention, to shew what mean thoughts those have of the catholic church, who confine it to the Roman communion. Theodoret and St. Chrysostom both affirm[a], "that the Persians had the scriptures then in their own language;" and Sozomen saith, "that Symeon, archbishop of Seleucia and Ctesiphon, before his own martyrdom, encouraged the rest to suffer out of the holy scripture;" which supposes them well acquainted with the language of it, and it is not very likely they should be either with the Hebrew, Greek, or Latin; but the other testimonies make it clear that it was in their own tongue.

The anonymous writer of St. Chrysostom's[b] life affirms, "that while he stayed in Armenia, he caused the New Testament to be translated into the Armenian tongue for the benefit

r Euseb. de Vit. Const. l. 4. c. 8.
s C. 13.
t Soz. l. 2. c. 14.
u C. 12.
x Ammian. Marcell. l. 23.
y Soz. l. 2. c. 9.
z Theod. l. 5. c. 39.
a Theod. de Cur. Grec. affect. Serm. 5. p. 555. Serm. 9. p. 615. Chrys. in Joh. Hom. 2. p. 561.
b Vit. Chrys. c. 113.

of those churches." And this tradition is allowed by several learned men in the church of Rome. But the Armenians themselves say [c], "the whole Bible was translated into the Armenian language by Moses Grammaticus, David, and Mampræus, three learned men of their own, in the time of their patriarch Isaac, about St. Chrysostom's time." Theodoret, in the place already cited, mentions the Armenian translation as a thing well known; and he was near enough to understand the truth of it.

Jacobus de Vitriaco, a Roman cardinal, saith, "that the Armenians in his time had the scriptures read to them in their own language [d]."

The Syriac version, for the use of those in the eastern parts who understood not Hebrew or Greek, is allowed by all learned men to have been very ancient. I mean the old simple version out of the originals, and not that out of the LXX of the Old Testament. As to the New, the tradition of the eastern people is, "that it was done either in the apostles' times, or very near them." Abraham Ecchellensis [e] shews, from the Syriac writers, "that the complete translation of the Bible was made in the time of Abgarus, king of Edessa, by the means of Thaddæus, and the other apostles;" and as to the time of Thaddæus, Gregorius Malatiensis [f] confirms it.

Postellus quotes an ancient tradition, (which my adversaries ought to regard,) "that St. Mark himself translated not only his own Gospel, but all the books of the New Testament into the vulgar Syriac." It is sufficient to my purpose, to shew that there was such an ancient translation, which is owned by St. Chrysostom [g], St. Ambrose [h], St. Augustin [i], Diodorus [k], and Theodoret [l]: which makes me wonder at cardinal Bellarmine's affirming with so much confidence, "that none of the Fathers speak of the Syriac version [m]," when Theodoret alone mentions it so often in his commentaries.

Although the Greeks in Egypt might very well understand the Greek of the Old and New Testament, (especially if that

[c] Conc. Eccl. Armen. cum Rom. c. 7. p. 63.
[d] Hist. Orient. c. 79.
[e] Abr. Ecchell. not. in Ebed. Jesu.
[f] Greg. Hist. Dynast. 6.
[g] St. Chrysost. hom. 2. in Joh.
[h] Ambros. Hex. 1. c. 8.
[i] Aug. de Civit. Dei, l. 15. c. 13.
[k] Diod. ad Gen. xxvii. 27.
[l] Theod. in Psal. iii. 4; in Psal. ciii. 26; in Psal. cxii. 1; in Psal. cxv.
[m] De Verb. Dei, l. 2. c. 4.

which is called the LXX were done by the Alexandrian Jews, as some imagine,) yet those who knew no other than the old Egyptian language could not make use of it. And therefore a Coptic translation was made for them[n]; which Kircher thinks to have been 1300 years old. And he withal observes, "that their ancient liturgies were in the Coptic language."

That it might not be suspected that Kircher imposed upon the world, he gives a particular account of the books he had seen in the Vatican library, and elsewhere, in the Coptic tongue. "The Pentateuch in three tomes, distinguished into paragraphs by lines. The four Gospels by themselves. St. Paul's Epistles, and three Canonical Epistles, with the Acts, in another volume. The Apocalypse by itself, and the Psalter. The Liturgy of St. Mark, with other daily prayers. The Liturgy of St. Gregory, with the prayers of St. Cyril in the Coptic language; and a Liturgy of St. Basil, with Gregory and Cyril, with several other Rituals, Missals and Prayers, all in the same tongue. All these," he saith, "are in the Vatican library." And in that of the Maronites college, he saith[o], "is an old Coptic Martyrology about 1300 years standing, by which he finds, that the chief employment of the old Egyptian monks was to translate the Bible out of Hebrew, Chaldee, and Greek, into the Coptic tongue.

Morinus saith[p], "that in the Oratorian library at Paris, they had the Coptic Gospels brought from Constantinople by Mons. de Sancy."

Petrus à Valle[q], a nobleman of Rome, and a great traveller, saith, "he had several parts of scripture in the Coptic language, which were turned into Arabic, when the old Coptic grew into disuse."

Petræus had in the eastern parts a Coptic Psalter[r], with an Arabic version, which he designed to publish.

The congregation *de propaganda fide* at Rome, had several Coptic MSS. sent to them out of Egypt; among the rest, the Copic Book of Ordination[s], translated and printed by Kircher, and since reprinted by Morinus.

Seguier, the late chancellor of France, had in his library

n Prodr. Copt. c. 8.
o P. 186.
p Dissert. Epist. 13.
q Epist. 14.
r Hottinger. Methurgem. p. 189.
s De Ordinat. sacris, p. 504 Catal. MSS. p. 131.

the consecration of a patriarch in Coptic and Arabic, and several translations of the Bible, and prayers in both languages.

The Ethiopic translation[t] bears date with the conversion of the nation, according to their own tradition, which some make to be in the apostolical times, and others in the time of Constantine; and their public offices are performed in their own tongue. The chancellor Seguier had not only many parts of the Bible, but prayers and offices in the Ethiopic tongue.

I shall add but one thing more to this purpose, which is taken from the want of antiquity in the Arabic versions; which is confessed by the learned critics on all sides. And even this tends to prove my design. For when the Saracen empire prevailed, the people grew more acquainted with the Arabic than with the ancient Syriac or Coptic; and therefore the scripture was then translated into Arabic (as Vasæus saith it was done in Spain after the Moors came thither by a bishop of Sevil); and this was the true reason why the Arabic versions have no greater antiquity. For Gabriel Sionita[u] observes, "that the Arabic is become the most vulgar language in the Eastern parts." And because it was so in Syria as well as Egypt, therefore there are different Arabic versions; the one called *Codex Antiochenus*, and the other *Alexandrinus*.

Thus I have proved that there was a catholic tradition directly contrary to that established by order of the council of Trent.

And now I proceed to give an account of the methods and steps by which this decree came to its ripeness.

1. The first step was the declension and corruption of the Latin tongue in the western church. It is observed by Polybius[x], "that from the time of the first league between the Romans and Carthaginians, the Latin tongue was so much changed, even in Rome itself, that very few could understand the words of it." And Festus in *Latine loqui* saith, "that the language was so altered, that scarce any part of it remained entire." Scaliger thinks these words were added to Festus by Paulus Diaconus; which seems much more probable, since he lived in the time of Charlemagne. At which time we may easily

[t] Ludolph. Hist. Æthiop. l. 3. c. 4.
[u] Gabr. Sionita de Arab. c. 12.
[x] Polyb. l. 3.

suppose the Latin tongue to have been very much corrupted by the writers, and not so easy to be understood any where by the common people in sudden discourse, as it had been before. Which appears evident by the Latin sermons made to the people in the several provinces in the Roman empire; as in Africa by St. Augustin and Fulgentius; in Italy by Petrus Chrysologus, Laurentius Novariensis, Gaudentius Brixiensis, Ennodius Ticinensis; in Spain by Isidore, Ildephonsus, and others; in Gaul by Cæsarius, Eucherius, Eligius, and several others, whose Latin sermons to the people are still extant. In the council of Tours[y], in the time of Charlemagne, particular care is taken "that the homilies should be translated by their bishops either into the rustic Roman or the German, that the people might the easier understand them." These homilies were either those which Charlemagne caused to be taken out of the Fathers, and applied to the several lessons through the year, as Sigebert observes[z], or of their own composing; however, they were to be turned by the bishops either into rustic Roman or German, as served best to the capacities of the people. For the Franks then either retained the original German, or used the rustic Roman; but this latter so much prevailed over the other, that in the solemn oaths between Lewis and Charles, upon parting the dominions of France and Germany, set down in Nithardus[a], the rustic Roman was become the vulgar language of France, and these were but the grandchildren of Charlemagne. Marquardus Freherus[b] thinks that only the princes and great men retained the German, but the generality then spake the rustic Roman, as appears by the oath of the people; which begins thus:

"Si Lodwigs sacrament que Son Fradre Carlo jurat conservat[c], et Carlus meo Serdra de suo part non los tanit, si jo returnar non licet pois, ne io, ne neuls cui eo returnar nil pois, in nulla adjudha contra Lodwig nun li iver."

By which we may see what a mixture of Latin there was in the vulgar language then used by the Franks, and how easy it was for the people then to understand the public offices being constant; but the sermons not being so, there was greater

[y] Conc. Turon. 3. c. 17.
[z] Sigeb. ad an. 807.
[a] Nithard. l. 3.
[b] Freher. in Exposit. Fœderis inter Lud. et Car.
[c] V. Capitul. Caroli Calvi, tit. 8.

necessity to turn them into that corrupt or rustic Roman, which was thoroughly understood by them. In Spain the Latin was less corrupted before the Gothic and Arabic or Moorish words were taken into it. Lucius Marineus saith [d], "that had it not been for the mixture of those words, the Spaniards had spoken as good Latin as the Romans did in the time of Tully;" and he saith, "that to his time he had seen epistles written in Spanish, wherein all the nouns and verbs were good Latin." In Italy the affinity of the vulgar prevailing language and the Latin continued so great, that the difference seemed for some hundred years no more than of the learned and common Greek, or of the English and Scotch; and so no necessity was then apprehended of translating the correct tongue into a corrupt dialect of it.

But where there was a plain difference of language, there was some care even then taken that the people might understand what they heard, as appears by these things:

1. Alcuinus [e] gives an account why one day was called *Sabbatum in duodecim Lectionibus*, when there were but six lessons, and he saith, "it was because they were read both in Greek and Latin, they not understanding each other's languages." Not because the Greek was a holy tongue, but *quia aderant Græci, quibus ignota erat lingua Latina;* which shews that the church then thought it a reasonable cause to have the scripture in such a language which might be understood by the people. The same reason is given by Amalarius [f].

2. In the German churches there were ancient translations of scripture into their own language. B. Rhenanus [g] attributes a translation of the Gospels to Waldo, bishop of Freising, as soon as the Franks received Christianity; and he saith, "it was the immortal honour of the Franks to have the scripture so soon translated into their own language; which," saith he, "is of late opposed by some divines:" so little did he know of an universal tradition against it. Goldastus mentions the translation in rhyme by Ottofridus Wissenburgensis [h], pub-

[d] Marineus Sicul. de Rebus Hisp. l. 5. c. 4.
[e] Alcuin. De divin. Offic. c. 29.
[f] Amalar. de Offic. l. 2. c. 1.
[g] Rhenan. Rer. Germ. p. 112.
[h] Rer. Alem. tom. 1. p. 120. tom. 2. p. 119.

lished by Achilles Gassarus, the Psalter of Notkerus, Rudolphus ab Eems his paraphrase of the Old Testament. Andreas du Chesm hath published a preface before an old Saxon book [i], wherein it is said, "that Ludovicus Pius did take care that all the people should read the scripture in their own tongue, and gave it in charge to a Saxon to translate both Old and New Testament into the German language; which," saith he, "was performed very elegantly."

3. In the Saxon churches here, it was not to be expected that the scripture should be translated, till there were persons learned both in the Saxon and the other languages. Bede, in his epistle to Egbert, puts him upon instructing the common people in their own language, especially in the Creed and Lord's Prayer; and to further so good a work, Bede [k] himself translated the Gospel of St. John into the Saxon tongue, as Cuthbert saith in the epistle about his death, in the life of Bede, before his Saxon history. It appears by the old canons of churches, and the epistles of Alfric, saith Mr. Lisle, "that there was an old Saxon canon for the priest to say unto the people, the sense of the gospel in English [l];" and Elfric saith of himself, "that he had translated the Pentateuch and some of the historical books." The New Testament was translated by several hands; and an ancient Saxon translation hath been lately published with the Gothic Gospels. And there were old Saxon glosses upon the Gospels, of Aldred, Farmen, and Owen. The last work of king Alfred was the translating the Psalter; and if the MS. history of Ely deserves credit, he translated both the Old and New Testament.

4. It is not denied either by Bellarmine [m] or Baronius [n], "that the Slavonians in the ninth century had a permission upon their conversion to Christianity, to enjoy the Bible, and to have public offices performed in their own language." But they tell us, "it was because they were then children in the faith, and to be indulged;" (but methinks children were the most in danger to be seduced;) "or there were not priests enough to officiate in Latin at first:" but this was no reason then given, as appears by the pope's own letter published by

i Hist. Franc. tom. 2. p. 326.
k Bed. Epist. ad Egbert. p. 65.
l Saxon Treatise of the Old and New Testament.
m Bell. de Verbo Dei, l. 2.
n Bar. ad an. 880. n. 16.

Baronius, wherein "he gives God thanks for the invention of letters among them by Constantine a philosopher;" and he expressly saith, "that God had not confined his honour to three languages, but all people and languages were to praise him;" and he saith, "God himself in scripture had so commanded;" and he quotes St. Paul's words for it. One would wonder those great men should no better consider the pope's own reasons; but give others for him which he never thought of. It is true, he adds, "that he would have the gospel read first in Latin, and then in Slavonian, and if they pleased, he would have the mass said in Latin;" but the Slavonians continued their custom, and the pope was willing enough to let them enjoy it for his own convenience as well as theirs. For there was a secret in this matter, which is not fully understood.

Aventinus saith [o], "that Methodius invented their letters, and translated the scriptures into the Slavonian tongue, and persuaded the people to reject the Latin service;" but this I see no ground for. But the truth of the matter was, the Slavonians were converted by the means of Methodius and Cyril, (otherwise called Constantine,) two Greek bishops, and the Christian religion was settled among them by their means, and they translated the scriptures and offices of worship into their own language. The pope had not forgotten the business of the Bulgarians, and he could not tell but this might end in subjection to another patriarchal see; and therefore he endeavours to get Methodius and Cyril to Rome, and having gained them, he sends a sweetening letter to the prince, and makes the concession before mentioned. For he could not but remember how very lately the Greeks had gained the Bulgarians from him [p]; and lest the Slavonians should follow them, he was content to let them have what they desired, and had already established among themselves without his permission. All this appears from the account of this matter given by Constantinus Porphyrogenetus, compared with Diocleas his Regnum Slavorum, and Lucius his Dalmatian History.

It is sufficient for my purpose, that Diocleas owns that Constantine (to whom Andreas Dandalus, duke of Venice, in

[o] Aventin. Annal. l. 4. p. 434. [p] Bar. A. 869. n. 80.

his MS. history cited by Lucius[q], saith, the pope gave the name of Cyril) did translate the Bible into the Slavonian tongue for the benefit of the people, and the public offices out of Greek, according to their custom. And the chancellor Seguier had in his library both the New Testament and liturgies in the Slavonian language[r], and in Cyril's character; and many of the Greek Fathers' commentaries on scripture in that tongue, but not one of the Latin.

2. The next step was, when Gregory VII.[s] prohibited the translation of the Latin offices in the Slavonian tongue. And this he did to the king of Bohemia himself, after a peremptory manner; but he saith, it was the request of the nobility that they might have Divine offices in the Slavonian tongue, which he could by no means yield to. What was the matter? How comes the case to be so much altered from what it was in his predecessor's time? The true reason was, the Bohemian churches were then brought into greater subjection to the Roman see, after the consecration of Dithmarus Saxo to be their archbishop; and now they must own their subjection, as the Roman provinces were wont to do, by receiving the language. But as his predecessor had found scripture for it, so Gregory pretends he had found reason against it, viz. "the scripture was obscure, and apt to be misunderstood and despised." What! more than in the time of Methodius and Cyril? If they pleaded primitive practice, he plainly answers, "that the church is grown wiser, and hath corrected many things that were then allowed[t]." This is indeed to the purpose; and therefore by the authority of St. Peter he forbids him to suffer any such thing, and charges him to oppose it with all his might.

But after all, it is entered in the canon law, *De Officio Jud. Ord.* l. 1. tit. 31. c. *Quoniam*, as a decree of Innocent III. in the Lateran council, that where there were people of different languages, the bishop was to provide persons fit to officiate in those several languages. Why so, if there were a prohibition of using any but the Latin tongue? But this was

[q] Luc. de Regno Dalmatiæ, l. 2. c. 3.
[r] Catal. MSS. p. 35, 54.
[s] Greg. Reg. st. l. 7. Ep. 11.
[t] Cum primitiva Ecclesia multa dissimulaverit quæ a sanctis Patribus postmodum firmata Christianitate, et religione crescente, subtili examinatione correcta sunt.

for the Greeks, and theirs was an holy tongue. That is not said; nor if it were, would it signify any thing; for doth any imaginary holiness of the tongue sanctify ignorant devotion? But the canon supposes them to have the same faith. Then the meaning is, that no man must examine his religion by the scripture, but if he resolves beforehand to believe as the church believes, then he may have the scriptures or prayers in what language he pleases. But even this is not permitted in the Roman church. For,

3. After the inquisition was set up by the authority of Innocent III. in the Lateran council, no lay persons were permitted to have the books of the Old and New Testament, but the Psalter or Breviary or Hours they might have; but by no means in the vulgar language. This is called by D'Achery and Labbe[u] the *council of Tholouse*, but in truth it was nothing else but an order of the inquisition, as will appear to any one that reads it. And the inquisition ought to have the honour of it, both in France and Spain. Which prohibition hath been so grateful to some divines of the church of Rome, that Cochlæus[x] calls it "pious, just, reasonable, wholesome, and necessary;" Andradius[y] thinks the taking of it away would be destructive to faith; Ledesma saith[z], "the true catholics do not desire it, and bad ought not to be gratified with it." Petrus Sutor[a], a Carthusian doctor, calls the translating scripture into the vulgar languages "a rash, useless, and dangerous thing;" and he gives the true reason of it, viz. "that the people will be apt to murmur when they see things required as from the apostles, which they cannot find a word of in scripture." And when all is said on this subject that can be, by men of more art, this is the plainest and honestest reason for such a prohibition; but I hope I have made it appear it is not built on any catholic tradition.

IV. Of the merit of good works.

The council of Trent, sess. 6. c. 16, declares, "that the good works of justified persons do truly deserve eternal life;" and

u Labb. Concil. t. 11. p. 427.

x Cochl. c. Alex. Alesium, A. D. 1533.

y Andrad. Defens. Concil. Trident. l. 4.

z Ledesma de Div. Script. quavis lingua non leg. p. 155.

a Pet. Sutor de Tralatione Bibliæ, p. 99. p. 96.

can. 32. an anathema is denounced against him that denies them to be meritorious, or that a justified person by them doth not truly merit increase of grace and happiness and eternal life.

The council hath not thought fit to declare what it means by truly meriting; but certainly it must be opposed to an improper kind of meriting, and what that is we must learn from the divines of the church of Rome.

1. Some say, that some of the Fathers speak of an improper kind of merit, which is no more than the due means for the attaining of happiness as the end. So Vega[b] confesses they often use the word *merit*, where there is no reason for merit, either by way of congruity or condignity. Therefore where there is true merit, there must be a proper reason for it. And the council of Trent being designed to condemn some prevailing opinions at that time, among those they called heretics, this assertion of true merit must be levelled against some doctrine of theirs; but they held good works to be necessary as means to an end, and therefore this could not be the meaning of the council.

Suarez saith[c], "the words of the council ought to be specially observed, which are, that there is nothing wanting in the good works of justified persons, *ut vere promeruisse censeantur*; and therefore no metaphorical or improper, but that which by the sense of the church of Rome was accounted true merit, in opposition to what was said by those accounted heretics, must be understood thereby."

2. Others say, that a mere congruity arising from the promise and favour of God, in rewarding the acts of his grace in justified persons, cannot be the proper merit intended by the council. And that for these reasons:

1. Suarez observes[d], that although the council avoids the terms *ex condigno*, yet because it still uses the words *vere mereri*, it implies something more than mere congruity; and because it speaks of meriting the increase of grace, and not the first grace; now a congruity is allowed for the first grace, which it excludes by mentioning the increase. And withal, it

[b] Vega de Justif. l. 8. c. 8.
[c] Suarez de Grat. l. 12. c. 1. n. 8
[d] Suarez de Grat. l. 12. c. 1. n. 12.

brings places to prove that the giving the reward must be a retribution of justice, and if so, the merit must be more than that of congruity.

2. Because God's promise doth not give any intrinsic value to the nature of the act; no more than his threatening doth increase the nature of guilt. If the king of Persia had promised a province to him that gave him a draught of water, the act itself had been no more meritorious, but it only shewed the munificence of the prince; no more do God's promises of eternal life add any merit to the acts of grace, but only set forth the infinite bounty of the Promiser.

3. In the conference at Ratisbon, (the year this decree passed by the emperor's order,) the protestant party did yield [e], that by virtue of God's promise the reward of eternal life was due to justified persons; as a father promising a great reward to his son for his pains in studying, makes it become due to him, although there be no proportion between them. And if no more were meant by merit of congruity, than that it was very agreeable to the Divine nature to reward the acts of his own grace with an infinite reward, they would yield this too.

4. Cardinal Pallavicini gives us the plain and true meaning of the council [f], viz. "that a merit *de congruo* was allowed for works before justification; but for works after, they all agreed," he saith, "that there was a merit *de condigno* in them, both for increase of grace and eternal glory." By merit *de condigno* is meant such an intrinsic value in the nature of the act, as makes the reward in justice to be due to it.

Some call one of these, *meritum secundum quid* [g], which is the same with *de congruo;* which really deserves no reward, but receives it only from the liberality of the giver; and this hath not truly, say they, the notion of merit; but that which makes the reward due is simple and true merit, when it doth not come merely from the kindness of the giver, but from respect to the worthiness of the action and the doer, and this is *de condigno.*

Let us now see what catholic tradition there was for this

[e] Disputat. Ratisbonæ an. 1546. p. 568.

[f] Hist. Conc. Trid. l. 8. c. 4. n. 4.

[g] Rich. de Media Vill. in l. 2. sent. dist. 17. art. 2. q. 1. Nich. de Orbellis in 3. sent. dist. 27.

doctrine, and whether this were taught them by their Fathers in a continued succession down from the apostles' times.

But that there was a change as to the sense of the church in this matter, I shall prove in the first place from an office which was allowed in the church before, and forbidden after. It was an office with respect to dying persons, wherein are these questions:

Q. "Dost thou believe that thou shalt come to heaven, not by thy own merits, but by the virtue and merit of Christ's passion [h]?"

A. "I do believe it [i]."

Q. "Dost thou believe that Christ died for our salvation, and that none can be saved by their own merits, or any other way but by the merits of his passion [k]?"

A. "I do believe it [l]."

Now when the *Indices Expurgatorii* were made in pursuance to the order of the council of Trent, this passage was no longer endured. For in the Roman Index, the *Ordo baptizandi*, wherein this question was, is forbidden till it were corrected. But the Spanish Indices explain the mystery; that of cardinal Quiroga saith expressly, "those questions and answers must be blotted out;" and the like we find in the Index of Soto Major and Sandoval. What now is the reason that such questions and answers were no longer permitted, if the church's tradition continued still the same? Was not this a way to know the tradition of the church by the offices used in it? This was no private office then first used, but although the prohibition mentions one impression at Venice, (as though there had been no more,) I have one before me, printed by Gryphius at Venice two years before that; and long before with the *Præceptorium* of Lyra, A. D. 1495, where the question to the dying person is in these words, *Si credit se merito passionis Christi et non propriis ad gloriam pervenire? Et respondeat, Credo.* And the same questions and answers I have in a *Sacerdotale Romanum* printed by Nicolinus at

h "Credis non propriis meritis, sed passionis Domini nostri Jesu Christi virtute et merito ad gloriam pervenire?"

i "Credo."

k "Credis quod Dominus noster Jesus Christus pro salute nostra mortuus sit; et quod ex propriis meritis, vel alio modo nullus possit salvari nisi in merito passionis ejus?"

l "Credo."

Venice, 1585. Cardinal Hosius says [m], that he had seen these questions and answers in the *Sacerdotale Romanum*, and in the *Hortulus Animæ*; and that they were believed to be first prescribed by Anselm, archbishop of Canterbury. On what account now come these things to be prohibited and expunged, if the church's doctrine and tradition about this matter be still the very same? No doubt it was believed that the council of Trent had now so far declared the sense of the church another way, that such questions and answers were no longer to be endured.

But before the council of Trent, the canons of Colen [n] against Hermannus their bishop, when he published his Reformation, declare, that God's giving eternal life upon good works, is *ex gratuita dignatione suæ clementiæ*, from the favour which God vouchsafes to them. Which to my apprehension is inconsistent with the notion of true merit in the works themselves; for if there be any condignity in them, it cannot be mere grace and favour in God to reward them.

The same canons in their Enchiridion [o] some years before, when they joined with their bishop, call it stupidity to think that good works are rewarded with eternal life for any dignity in the works themselves. And if there be no dignity in them, there can be no true merit; as the council of Trent determines with an anathema.

Pope Adrian VI. [p] gives such an account of the merit of our works, that he could never imagine any condignity in them to eternal life. "For," saith he, "our merits are a broken reed, which pierce the hand of him that leans upon them; they are a menstruous cloth; and our best actions mixed with impurities; and when we have done all that we can, we are unprofitable servants."

Petrus de Alliaco [q], cardinal of Cambray, attributes no other effect to good works than of a *causa sine qua non*; and saith, that the reward is not to be attributed to any virtue in them, but to the will of the Giver. Which I think overthrows any true merit.

[m] Hos. Confess. Petricovi, c. 73. p. 144.
[n] Antididagma Colon. f. 16. 2.
[o] Enchirid. Colon. f. 176. 2.
[p] Adrian. de Sacr. Euchar. f. 61.
[q] Pet. de Alliaco, in 4. l. sent. q. 1. art. 1. f. 225. c.

Gabriel Biel[r] attributes the merit of good works, not to any intrinsical goodness in them, but to God's acceptation. Which is in words to assert merit, and in truth to deny it; for how can there be true merit in the works, if all their value depends upon Divine acceptance?

Thomas Walden[s] charges Wickliff with asserting the doctrine of merit, and encouraging men to trust in their own righteousness, and he quotes scriptures and fathers against it; and he blames the use of the term of *merit*, either *ex congruo* or *ex condigno*; which, he saith, was an invention of some late schoolmen, and was contrary to the ancient doctrine of the church: as he proves, not only from scripture and fathers, but from the ancient offices too; as in the canon of the mass, *Non æstimator meriti, sed veniæ quæsumus largitor*, &c. Fer. 4. Pass. *Ut qui de meritorum qualitate diffidimus, non judicium tuum sed misericordiam consequamur*. Dom. 2. Adv. *Ubi nulla suppetunt suffragia meritorum, tuæ nobis indulgentiæ succurre præsidiis*. How comes the doctrine condemned in Wickliff to be established in the council of Trent? For he was blamed for asserting true merit, and the council asserts it with an anathema to those that deny it. And yet we must believe the very same tradition to have been in the church all this while.

Vega saith[t], that Walden speaks against merits without grace; but any one that reads him will find it otherwise. For he produces those passages out of the Fathers against merits which do suppose Divine grace, as it were easy to shew; but friar Walden thought the notion of merit inconsistent with the power and influence of Divine grace necessary to our best actions. God, saith he, doth not regard merit either as to congruity or condignity, but his own grace and will and mercy.

Marsilius de Ingen[u], who lived before Walden, reckons up three opinions about merit; the first, of those who denied it, and of this, saith he, Durandus seems to be, and one Joh. de Everbaco. The second, of those who said that our works have no merit of themselves, but as informed by Divine grace, and from the assistance of the Holy Ghost, so they do truly

[r] Biel in l. 2. sent. dist. 27. art. 1. not. 3.

[s] Walden de Sacram. tit. 1. c. 7.

[t] Vega in Opusc. qu. 4.

[u] Marsil. in l. 2. sent. q. 18.

merit eternal life; and of this opinion, he saith, was Thomas de Argentina. The third was, of those who granted that true merit doth imply an equality; but then they distinguish equality as to quantity and as to proportion; and in this latter sense they asserted an equality. And of this opinion, he saith, was Petrus de Tarantasia. But he delivers his own judgment in these conclusions:

1. That our works, either considered in themselves, or with Divine grace, are not meritorious of eternal life *ex condigno*, which he proves both from scripture and reason, viz. because, 1. no man can make God a debtor to him; for the more grace he hath, the more he is a debtor to God. And, 2. he cannot merit of another by what he receives from him. And, 3. no man can pay what he owes to God, and therefore can never merit at his hands. 4. No man can merit here so much grace as to keep him from falling away from grace; much less, then, eternal life.

2. These works may be said to be meritorious of eternal life *ex condigno*, by Divine acceptation originally proceeding from the merit of Christ's passion, because that makes them worthy. But this is Christ's merit, and not the true merit of our works.

3. Works done by grace do merit eternal life *de congruo* from God's liberal disposition, whereby he hath appointed so to reward them: it being agreeable to him to give glory to them that love him. But this is an improper kind of merit, and can by no means support the tradition of true merit.

Durandus[x] utterly denies any true merit of man towards God; he doth not deny it in a large improper sense for such a condignity in our actions as God hath appointed in order to a reward; which is by the grace of God in us; but as it is taken for a free action to which a reward is in justice due; because whatever we do is more owing to the grace of God than to ourselves; but to make a debtor to us, we must not only pay an equivalent to what we owe, but we must go beyond it; but to God and our parents we can never pay an equivalent, much less exceed it[y]. And we can never merit by what God gives us, because the gift lays a greater obligation upon us. And he saith, the holding the contrary is temerarious and blasphemous.

[x] Durand. in Sent. l. 2. dist. 27. q. 2. [y] N. 14.

The two grounds of holding merit were, the supposing a proportion between grace and glory, and an equality between Divine grace and glory in virtue, grace being as the seed of glory; and to both these he answers.

To the first, that the giving a reward upon merit is no part of distributive, but commutative justice, because it respects the relation of one thing to another, and not the mere quality of the person.

To the second, that the value of an act is not considered with respect to the first mover, but to the immediate agent: and as to grace being the seed of glory, it is but a metaphorical expression, and nothing can be drawn from it. So that Durandus concludes true merit with respect to God to be temerarious, blasphemous, and impossible.

Ockam declares [z], that after all our good works, God may without injustice deny eternal life to them who do them; because God can be debtor to none; and therefore whatever he doth to us, it is out of mere grace. And that there can be nothing meritorious in any act of ours, but from the grace of God freely accepting it. And therefore he must deny any true merit.

Gregorius Ariminensis saith [a], that no act of ours, though coming from grace to never so great a degree, is meritorious with God *ex condigno* of any reward, either temporal or eternal; because every such act is a gift of God; and if it were at all meritorious, yet not as to eternal life, because there is no equivalency between them, and therefore it cannot in justice be due to it; and consequently if God gives it, he must do it freely. But, saith he, God is said to be just when he gives *bona pro bonis*, and merciful when he gives *bona pro malis*: not but that he is merciful in both, but because his mercy appears more in the latter; and in the other, it seems like justice in a general sense from the conformity of the merit and the reward; but in this particular retribution it is mere mercy.

Scotus affirms [b], that all the meritoriousness of our acts depends on Divine acceptation in order to a reward; and if it did depend on the intrinsic worth of the acts, God could not in

[z] Ockam in 4. sent. q. 3. ad secundum. In l. 1. dist. 17. q. 1. in l. 1. dist. 17. q. 2.

[a] Greg. Arim. in l. 1. sent. dist. 17. art. 2.

[b] Scot. in l. 1. sent. dist. 17. q. 3. n. 24.

justice deny the reward, which is false; and therefore it wholly depends on the good-will and favour of God.

Bellarmine[c] is aware of this, and he confesses this to be the opinion of Scotus, and of other old schoolmen. But how then do they hold the doctrine and tradition of true merit? He holds, that good works are properly and truly good. So do we, and yet deny merit. But he grants, that he denies that they bear any proportion to eternal life; and therefore they cannot be truly meritorious of it. Bellarmine himself asserts, that without the Divine promise, good works have a proportion to eternal life, and this he saw was necessary to defend the doctrine of the council of Trent; but then he adds, that there is no obligation on God's part to reward in such a manner, without a promise. Now here are two hard points: 1. to make it appear that there is such a meritoriousness in good works, without a Divine promise: 2. that if there were so, there is no obligation on God to reward such acts in point of justice. The former is so much harder to do from what he had proved before, ch. 14, viz. "that they are not meritorious without a promise;" and here he proves that they have no proportion to the reward, from scripture, fathers, and reason; because there is no obligation on God to do it, either from commutative or distributive justice; and because we are God's servants. These are good arguments against himself; for how can such acts then become meritorious without a promise? If there be no proportion or equality on man's part, no justice on God's part to reward, how can they possibly be meritorious? But this is too deep for me to comprehend. My business is tradition, and I have evidently proved that there was no tradition even in the church of Rome for the true merit defined by the council of Trent. It were easy to carry this point higher, by shewing that the Fathers knew nothing of this doctrine, but that hath been done by many already, and it is needless in so plain a case.

But I am now to give an account by what steps and occasions this doctrine came to be established.

1. From the common use of the word *merit* with the Fathers and others, in another sense than it signified at first[d]. The

[c] Bell. de Just. l. 5. c. 17.
[d] Jos. Scalig. in Varr. de L. L. p. 172. Bud. in Pandect. p. 362. Plin. Ep. l. 1. 8.

original signification of it is *wages paid in consideration of service*; and from thence soldiers were said *merere* (as Budæus observes, and thence came the word *merces*) who truly deserved their pay by their labour and hazard; but by degrees it came to signify no more than merely to attain a thing; which is sometimes used by good authors; but in the declension of the Latin tongue, no sense of this word was more common than this, especially among ecclesiastical writers. Who frequently used it in a sense wherein it was impossible to understand it in its original signification; and it cannot imply so much as *digne consequi*, as in the instance brought by Cassander[e]; when St. Cyprian renders those words of St. Paul, *Misericordiam merui*, which we render, *I obtained mercy*; but the council of Trent allows there could be no true merit here. And St. Augustin[f] saith of those who murdered the Son of God, *Illi veniam meruerunt qui Christum occiderunt.* And so the vulgar Latin often uses it, Gen. iv. 13, *Major est iniquitas mea quam ut veniam merear.* Jos. xi. 20, *Et non mererentur ullam clementiam.* And in that sense it hath been used in the hymns and other offices of the church; as in that expression, *O felix culpa quæ talem ac tantum meruit habere Redemptorem!* where it cannot be denied that the word is used in an improper sense.

2. When the school divines set themselves to explain the mysteries of theology, this plain and easy, but improper sense of merit, would not go down with some of them; but they endeavoured to make out the notion of merit with respect to God in its proper and original sense. The last considerable writer, before the scholastic age, was St. Bernard, and he pretended not to find out any such proportion between the best works and eternal life, "that God should be bound in justice to bestow it as a recompense for them[g];" and the reason he gives is plain and strong, "because those things men pretend to merit by are themselves the gifts of God's grace, and so by them they are more bound to God than God to them," but besides,

[e] Cassand. in Hymn. Eccl. p. 179.

[f] Aug. in Joh. tr. 31. n. 9.

[g] Neque enim talia sunt hominum merita, ut propter ea vita æterna deberetur ex jure, aut Deus injuriam aliquam faceret, nisi eam donaret. Nam ut taceam quod merita omnia dona Dei sunt, et ita homo magis propter ipsa Deo debitor est, quam Deus homini, quid sunt merita omnia ad tantam gloriam? Bernard. Serm. 1. de Annun. Bellarm. de Justif. l. 5. c. 6.

" what are all men's merits to eternal glory?" St. Bernard doth not speak of merits without grace, but with the supposition of it; and Bellarmine wisely left out the latter part, that he might seem to answer the former.

Hugo de Sancto Victore [h] lived in the same age, who first shewed the way to school divinity, and upon the same place which St. Bernard speaks of, *Non sunt condignæ*, &c. he puts the question, how any temporal acts can merit that which is eternal? And he denies any condignity, because there is more in the reward than there was in the merit; but then he adds, that there may be a threefold comparison of things; either as to themselves, as a horse for a horse, money for money; or according to equity, either in punishments or rewards; or by pact or agreement, as when a good sum is promised for a little work; and this, saith he, God hath made known to mankind, as to future rewards and punishments. Which plainly shews he understood nothing of the proportion between acts of grace and an eternal happiness; but resolved all into the favour and mercy of God.

Peter Lombard [i], called the Master of the Sentences, saith, " Nothing of any condignity or proportion is in our works to the reward; but," he saith, " they are themselves God's gifts, and that the reward itself is from the grace of God," and quotes the noted saying of St. Augustin, *Cum coronat Deus merita nostra, nihil aliud coronat quam dona sua.* But still this is nothing but grace and favour in God, first in enabling us to do good works, and then in rewarding them.

Bandinas wrote a book of the Sentences much about the time Peter Lombard did, with so much agreement of method and expressions, that it is not known which took from the other. Genebrard [k] hath produced this passage out of him, *Debet, inciviliter de Deo dicitur, quia nihil omnino nobis debet, nisi ex promisso.* If it be so rude to say " God owes any thing to his creatures but by promise," he could not imagine any condignity in good works, to which a reward is due in justice. And Genebrard thinks he had reason to deny, " that God can be made a debtor to us by any of our works."

Robertus Pullus [l], who wrote another book of the Sentences

[h] Hugo de S. Vict. Annot. Elucidator. in Rom.

[i] Lomb. Sent. l. 2. dist. 27.

[k] Genebrard. de Trinit. l. 3. p. 312.

[l] Pull. Sentent. part. 1. c. 13.

about the same time, mentioning that place, *Non sunt condignæ*, &c. he saith, "Because our works are not sufficient, being small and temporal, God by his mercy makes it up;" which not only shews that God doth reward beyond our merit, but that there is no proportion between the best works and eternal glory.

But by the time of Gulielmus Antissiodorensis [m], there were two parties in the church about this point; some, he saith, denied any merit of eternal life, *ex condigno*, and others asserted it; and after laying down the arguments on both sides, he concludes for the affirmative; but in answer to the place, *Non sunt condignæ*, &c., he saith, they are not *ad proportionaliter merendum*, but they are *ad simpliciter merendum*; so that still he denied any proportion, though he held simple merit.

But Thomas Aquinas coming after him [n], denies that there can be any simple merit with respect to God, because that cannot be where there is so great inequality; and so there can be no equal justice between them, but according to a proportion; which he afterwards explains, viz. as to the substance and freedom of our good works there is only a congruity; but as they proceed from Divine grace, so they are meritorious of eternal life, *ex condigno* [o].

This doctrine had some followers in the schools, but not many in comparison of those who opposed it, as appears by what is said already.

Richardus de Mediavilla [p], though a Franciscan, follows herein the doctrine of Aquinas, and asserts, that by acts of free will, informed by grace, a man may merit eternal life *ex condigno*, and he adds somewhat more, *potest certissime*; and he uses the same answers to the objections which the other did.

And Nich. de Orbellis [q] follows Richardus, so that Aquinas his doctrine had prevailed beyond his own school.

But it was as vehemently opposed by others of that fraternity, among whom cardinal Hosius [r] mentions Stephanus

[m] Guliel. Antis. l. 3. tr. 12. q. 2. de merito virt.

[n] 1. 2. q. 114. art. 1.

[o] Art. 3.

[p] Richard. in Sent. l. 2. dist. 27. art. 2. q. 3.

[q] Nich. d'Orb. in Sent. l. 2. dist. 27.

[r] Hos. Confess. Petrico c. 73. p. 141.

Brulifer, who maintained, "that no act of grace, how good soever, was worthy of eternal life."

Paulus Burgensis[s], though he is said to have been converted from being a Jew, by reading Aquinas, yet utterly dissented from him in this matter: for he saith, that no man can, by the ordinary assistance of grace, merit eternal life *ex condigno*, and therefore the mercy of God is most seen in heaven.

However the reputation of Aquinas might gain upon some, yet this was very far then from being a catholic tradition.

But no council ever interposed its authority in this matter till the council of Trent, which resolved to carry the points in difference to the height, and to establish every thing that was questioned. Nothing had been more easy than to have given satisfaction in this matter, considering what Pighius and Contarenus, and even Genebrard, had yielded in it; but there the rule was, that every thing that was disputed must be determined first, and then defended.

And so it hath happened with this decree, which, lest we should think the matter capable of softening, hath been since asserted in the highest manner. Bellarmine[t] asserts good works of themselves, and not merely by compact, to be meritorious of eternal life, so that in them there is a certain proportion and equality to eternal life.

Costerus saith[u], "that in works of grace, there is an equality between the work and the reward."

Suarez[x], "that they have an intrinsical dignity, whereby they become worthy of eternal life."

Vasquez[y], "that there is an equality of dignity between good works and eternal life, without which a promise could not make true merit."

The Rhemists say[z], "that good works are truly and properly meritorious, and justly worthy of everlasting life; and that thereupon heaven is the just due and just stipend, crown or recompense, which God by his justice oweth to the persons so doing by his grace."

And again, "that good works are meritorious, and the very

[s] P. Burg. addit. ad Lyram in Ps. xxxv.
[t] Bell. de Justif. l. 5. c. 17.
[u] Coster. Enchirid. p. 294.
[x] Suarez de Grat. l. 12. c. 1. n. 18.
[y] Vasquez in 1. 2. Disp. 213. c. 5.
[z] Rhemists on 2 Tim. iv. 8.

cause of salvation, so far that God should be unjust if he rendered not heaven for the same [a]."

Ph. Gamachæus [b], a late professor of divinity in the Sorbonne, speaks it roundly, "that the council of Trent did plainly mean to establish merit *ex condigno*, and that all catholics are agreed in it."

The last defender of the council of Trent within these few years, saith, "that there is an intrinsical condignity in good works, whereby they bear a proportion commensurate with the glory of heaven. And without such doctrine as this, he doth not think the council of Trent can be defended in this matter [c]."

If, after all, it be said, that this is a mere subtlety concerning the proportion an act of grace bears to the state of glory; I answer, the more to blame they who have made and imposed it as a matter of faith, as the council of Trent has done with an anathema, and that without any pretence from catholic tradition.

But what made the council of Trent so much concerned for a scholastic subtlety? There was a deep mystery lay in this; they were wise enough to frame the decree so as to avoid offence, and to make it appear plausible, but it was enough to the people to understand that the merit of good works was allowed, and they were to believe the priests, both as to the good works they were to do, and as to the putting them into a state of grace, to make them capable of meriting. And this was the true reason of the anathema against those who should deny the true merit of good works.

[a] On Heb. vi. 8.

[b] Gamach. in 1. 2. Th. Q. 114. c. 2. Concil. 2. Omnes catholici fatentur justos suis bonis operibus mereri gloriam de condigno.

[c] Aug. Reding Defens. Conc. Trident. tr. 4. sect. 2. ad sess. 6. c. 1.

THE

DIFFERENCE

BETWEEN

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

AND

THE CHURCH OF ROME.

IN

OPPOSITION TO A LATE BOOK,

ENTITLED,

"AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND AND THE CHURCH OF ROME."

THE author of a book newly published, called, "The Agreement between the Church of England and Church of Rome," saith, "[a] 'There has been of late a great cry that the clergy of the church of England are now the chief, if not the only opposers of popery, and defenders of the protestant religion:" and therefore, "to put a check to the insulting talk of our clergy, (who would be thought the only champions against popery,) it is become necessary in the present juncture to emit such an essay as this," to shew an agreement between the church of England and Rome; and "that the controversy lies only between the church of Rome and the protestant dissenter." This, I confess, is an expedient of expedients, and as it is necessary for the relief of those who are so successfully beaten out of their late pleas of misrepresentation, that they sullenly declare, "[b] until that be yielded, they will not dispute:" so it may be "necessary in this present juncture," for the charming that adder, which has yet been deaf to all the arguments of flattery, interest, and fear; and to put an end to that answer-

[a] Preface to the Agreement. [b] Page 1.

ing, replying, rejoining, and sur-rejoining, which for some months, he saith, both sides have been employed in. For if there be an agreement in opinion between both churches, there will be no further occasion for disputing between them; and if "the only opposers of popery," the clergy of the church of England, are convinced of it, there will be no further disputing nor opposition; since those between whom the controversy then only lies, viz. the church of Rome and protestant dissenter, are, it seems, upon terms of mutual cessation.

But now, lest those of the church of England, that after all the complaints made against them for misrepresentation, will not grant any such thing properly, and in a strict sense, (and it is likely not in any sense,) should be as obstinate and hard to be convinced in this case; therefore to put it out of dispute, (if he be to be credited,) he [c] has with some clearness demonstrated the agreement of opinion between the church of England and Rome to be exact and full. And if demonstration and clearness of demonstration will not do it, nothing will. But it is some men's way to talk most of infallibility, self-evidence, and clearness of demonstration, when they are furthest from it; and I began presently to suspect our author's credit, when I found him to shift his ground, as if he did distrust his own demonstrations.

As for instance,

1. He had no sooner begun to demonstrate this exact and full agreement of opinion, but by way of prevention, he declares, "[d] He would not incumber his discourse with a catalogue of agreements in the great doctrines of Christian religion, and matters of opinion, but would confine himself to matters of government and worship, which chiefly concern men's practices." How! demonstrate the agreement of opinion, and yet forbear meddling with matters of opinion! to undertake it, and then to except the thing he undertakes! and then to confine himself to matters of government and worship, as if there were not as much reason to shew an agreement in doctrine as practice; or that matters of government and worship were not also matters of doctrine!

2. When he seems to come to the point he confines himself to, viz. government and worship, yet he fails again, for it is

[c] Preface. [d] Page 2.

only in some[e] parts of worship, which he ventures to say that the agreement will be found exact and full. As one sensible that though there is nothing in the Liturgy and prayers of the church of England, (which he instances in,) as to the matter of them, but what every Christian may allow, and so what the pope may as well as (he saith[f]) "did approve;" yet, that their Missal and Breviary contain such prayers to the saints, and for souls departed, &c. as can be by no other figure made to agree with the worship and prayers used in the church of England, than one part of a contradiction can be reconciled to the other.

3. It is further worthy of our observation, that the agreement he pretends to prove is not from the avowed doctrine of either church, but by some quotations he produces from two or three particular authors, on the part of the church of England; and from such as on their own side are rejected by the [g]governing part of their church. So for instance, he saith of the church of England, "They are the avowed principles of some of the clergy and late writers." And when he undertakes for the Romish church, he tells us, [h]that "a great, if not the greatest part, grant to the pope but a primacy, for the sake of catholic concord," &c. For proof of which he appeals to the councils of Constance and Basil, and the privileges of the Gallican church. And yet the acts of those councils were reprobated in succeeding councils; and so far as concerns this case, were utterly disallowed, as Bellarmine saith[i]. And of what little authority the Gallic privileges have been accounted at Rome, there needs no more evidence than the case of De Marca[k], as it is represented by this author. So that let his quotations[l] (which he pretends to be very just in) be admitted; yet his argument from thence, for an exact and full agreement as to this matter, amounts to this only: Some of the church of England are for a primacy for concord sake, and some of the church of Rome are for no more; therefore the agreement betwixt the church of England and Rome is very exact and full in those points. And if this be his way of demonstration, it might to as good purpose be shewed, that there is also in

[e] Page 3.
[f] Page 60.
[g] Preface.
[h] Page 16. 18. 30, 31.
[i] De Concil. l. 1. c. 7.
[k] Page 22, &c.
[l] Preface.

several points this kind of agreement between those that, he saith, the controversy only lies between, viz. the church of Rome and the protestant dissenter.

4. When he offers at a demonstration from these particular authors, he attempts not to prove it so much from what they say, as from what he himself infers from it. So much he acknowledges; for when he had charged Dr. Sherlock to have "found out a Divine institution for the pope's primacy[m]," (this being so gross as he could not father it upon him, but he should soon be detected,) he brings himself off with this, "This, I confess, the doctor doth not expressly carry any further than the combinations of a national church and primacy," that is, he says no such thing.

5. When he doth find out some things in which the churches are agreed, they are such things as the church of England agrees with the ancient and most other churches in, viz. episcopacy and a liturgy; and it had been to the like purpose, if he had also shewed their agreement in the great doctrines of Christian religion. And yet even here he fails again; for he that concludes, "[n] In a word, the agreement between the English clergy and the Romanists, about the immediate Divine right of episcopacy, is so full," &c. doth before acknowledge that "ordination by presbyters[o] is granted in the church of Rome to be valid and regular, and that all those that hold the supreme jurisdiction of the pope[p] over the whole catholic church visible, do hold the Divine right of bishops to be but mediate, [*mediante papa.*]" So that he is gone from an agreement of churches to an agreement between persons; from a full agreement in opinion to an agreement in government and worship; from worship to some parts of worship; from demonstrations to inferences, and framed propositions of his own; from an agreement, at last, to a disagreement.

And now we may look back with some comfort to this bold offer and clear demonstration at the beginning, when he saith, "[q]The author has with some clearness demonstrated the agreement of opinion between the church of England men, and the church of Rome, to be so exact and full, that if the government should so design, it were but *dictum factum*, according to

[m] Page 42, 43, 44.
[n] Page 44.
[o] Page 36, 37.
[p] Page 42.
[q] Preface.

their doctrine; and a Cassandrian peace might be patched up presently with Rome."

He advances, as if he were a kind of plenipotentiary; but it may be suspected, he that has this way of demonstration is not like to be very fortunate in the negotiation.

Thus much shall suffice for our author's way of demonstration, and his attempt to shew the agreement between the church of England and church of Rome; leaving a fuller answer to some of his particular discourses to an abler pen.

But yet there remains another part toward a just state of the controversy[r], and that is, (as he well observed,) to let the world know how far these churches differ, as well as wherein they are agreed: but that was a province he had no mind to prosecute; as being, though more to the purpose, yet not so much to his design. For certainly he that will demonstrate the agreement to be full and exact, must either suppose there is no difference; or if there be, that the difference is not considerable enough to hinder the agreement. But if there be a difference, and the difference in points diametrically opposite and irreconcilable, it is to no purpose to shew their agreement (were it so) to be full and exact in others. And that this is the case, and the disagreement far greater than the agreement, I shall endeavour to prove, and that not from an author or two, or farfetched consequences, and forced interpretations, and dubious expressions, but from sufficient authorities, and the avowed principles of both churches. Such are the Thirty-nine Articles, the Catechism, the Homilies, and Liturgy of the church of England. Such again are the councils; more especially the council of Trent[s], the Catechism *ad Parochos*, the Rhemists' Annotations, the Missal and Breviaries; according to which, and the like, a papist represented (as the mode of speaking has been of late) doth believe.

In order to which I shall premise,

1. That there are some articles which both churches do in express terms agree in, called by our author[t] "the great doctrines of religion," viz. art. 1. Of the Holy Trinity; [and so, how Socinians can subscribe the Articles of the Church of England, as this author affirms[u], I understand not;] art. 2.

[r] Page 2.
[s] A Papist Misrepresented and Represented, Introduct.
[t] Agreement, p. 1.
[u] Page 2.

Of the Word or Son of God; art. 3. Of the going down of Christ into Hell; art. 4. Of the Resurrection of Christ; art. 5. Of the Holy Ghost; art. 7. Of the Old Testament; art. 8. Of the Three Creeds; art. 12. Of Good Works; art. 16. Of Sin after Baptism; art. 18. Of obtaining eternal Salvation only by the Name of Christ; art. 23. Of ministering in the Congregation; art. 26. Of the Unworthiness of Ministers; art. 27. Of Baptism; art. 33. Of Excommunicate Persons; art. 38. Of Christian Men's Goods; art. 39. Of a Christian Man's Oath. Against these the Jesuit [x], Johan. Roberti, hath little or nothing to object in his small tract purposely written in opposition to our Articles.

But of these Articles it is to be observed, there are some which each party differs as much from the other in, (when they come to explain themselves,) as if there had been no agreement in terms. Thus it happens in articles, 3rd, 7th, and 15th, as shall afterwards in part be shewed.

2. There are other articles wherein both churches do agree in the sense, though they differ in terms; or that are not so much controversies between church and church, as between private doctors in each church [y]. Of this opinion is a learned foreigner of the reformed religion, about the matter contained in articles the 10th and 17th, Of Freewill, and Of Predestination and Election. Of the former he saith, "The difference that our adversaries will object between them and us, upon this point of freewill, is only imaginary and mere cavil." Of the latter he concludes, "Since we agree in the fundamentals of this doctrine, (as we have already set forth,) and that our dissent is but with a few of their doctors, it would not be very hard, I should think, to find out such a bias of temperament, drawn from the word of God, in proposing of these opinions, and in terms so proportioned to their sublimity, as all humble and moderate spirits would find sufficient for their satisfaction."

3. There are other points which are matter of liberty, and left undetermined in the church of England; and so she doth receive into her communion as well those that deny as affirm.

[x] Eccles. Angl. Basis Impostura. Luxemb. 1679.

[y] Apology for the Protestants, done out of French into English, 1681. part 4. cap. 3. p. 135, 150.

But on the contrary, the church of Rome hath determined several points of this nature to be matters of faith; and anathematized those that do not so receive them. Thus they are accursed by the council of Trent[z] that say, "we are formally justified by the righteousness of Christ, [the only formal cause of our justification being the justice of God;" as it is there declared, cap. 8.] or that "we are justified by the alone imputation of Christ's righteousness;" or that "shall say, justifying faith is nothing else than a trust or confidence in the Divine mercy, forgiving sins for Christ's sake," &c. In which and the like, unless the church of England will curse those whom she doth bless, and cast out of her communion such as she receives into it, she can no more be reconciled to the church of Rome, than in those other points that for the matter of them are held and declared by herself to be false and erroneous.

4. There are articles which the two churches do in whole or in part so differ in, that the doctrine of the church of England cannot be the doctrine of the church of Rome; nor the doctrine of the church of Rome be the doctrine of the church of England. Such are most, if not all, of these following articles; viz. art. 6. Of the Sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures for Salvation; art. 9. Of Original Sin; art. 11. Of the Justification of Man; art. 13. Of Works before Justification; art. 14. Of Works of Supererogation; art. 15. Of Christ alone without Sin; art. 19. Of the Church; art. 20. Of the Authority of the Church; art. 21. Of the Authority of General Councils; art. 22. Of Purgatory; art. 24. Of speaking in the Congregation in such a Tongue as the People understandeth; art. 25. "Of the Sacraments; art. 28. Of the Lord's Supper; art. 29. Of the Wicked which eat not the Body of Christ; art. 30. Of both Kinds; art. 31. Of the Oblation of Christ upon the Cross; art. 32. Of the Marriage of Priests; art. 34. Of the Tradition of the Church; art. 35. Of the Homilies; art. 36. Of the Consecration of Bishops and Ministers; art. 37. Of the Civil Magistrates. These, besides several others which our Articles do not expressly mention, but are commonly the received principles of our church, are the irreconcilable points; and which all the wit and charity in the

[z] Sess. 6. can. 10—12, &c.

world can no more thoroughly reconcile than light and darkness.

How far this is true, and demonstrated to be so in the following sheets, I shall leave to the consideration of every intelligent reader: in which I have proceeded with care and impartiality from point to point; laying down first the doctrine of each church from unquestionable authorities, for my own justification; and then for the ease of the reader I have summed it up, and set each in opposition to the other. From all which I doubt not, but whatever friendship may be maintained betwixt the members of both churches, as we are fellow-subjects, yet it will be evident that there is no possibility of agreement between them in matters of religion, of making one church of what are so manifestly two.

It is upon the last sort I am now to proceed; and the first of which in order is the sixth Article of the Church of England.

The difference between the Church of England & Rome.

The Sixth Article of the Church of England.

Of the Sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures for Salvation.

"Holy scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation. In the name of the holy scripture we do understand those canonical books of the Old and New Testament, of whose authority was never any doubt in the church. The names and number of the canonical books, Genesis, &c. And the other books (as Hierome saith) the church doth read for example of life and instruction of manners: but yet doth it not apply them to establish any doctrine; such are these following, the Third Book of Esdras, the Fourth Book of Esdras, the Book of Tobias, the Book of Judith, the rest of the Book of Esther. [And the fourteen books commonly called Apocrypha.] All the books of the New Testament, as they are commonly received, we do receive, and account them canonical."

The Twentieth Article of the Church of England.

Of the Authority of the Church.

"Although the church be a witness and a keeper of holy writ, yet, as it ought not to decree any thing against the same, so besides the same ought it not to enforce any thing to be believed for necessity of salvation."

Homily the First, or an Exhortation to the Reading and Knowledge of Holy Scripture.

"There is in the scripture whatsoever is meet for all ages and sorts of men. These books ought therefore to be much in our hands, in our eyes, in our ears, in our mouths, but most of all in our hearts."

Homily Second, or an Exhortation &c.

"Surely none be enemies to the reading of God's word, but such as either be so ignorant, that they know not how wholesome a thing it is; or else be so sick, that they hate the most comfortable medicine should heal them; or so ungodly, that they would wish the people still to continue in blindness and ignorance of God."

The Church of Rome.

The Council of Trent.

"[a] The holy and general synod of Trent considering, that all saving truth and instruction of manners is contained in books written and traditions not written, (which received from the mouth of Christ himself by the apostles, or from the apostles, the Holy Spirit dictating, delivering as it were from hand to hand, have come even to us,) following the examples of the orthodox Fathers, doth receive and regard with the like affection of piety and reverence, all the books of the Old and New Testament, as also those unwritten traditions pertaining to faith and manners, dictated by Christ, as it were by word of mouth, or by the Holy Ghost, and preserved by a continual succession in the catholic church, and hath thought fit to add the index of the sacred books to this decree, lest it should be doubted which they are that are received by the sacred synod. They are these following: the five Books of

[a] Sess. 4. decret. de canon. script.

Moses, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, four Books of Kings, two of Chronicles, one of Esdras (called Nehemias), Tobias, Judith, Esther, Job, the Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Canticles, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, Isaias, Jeremias, with Baruch, Ezekiel, Daniel, the twelve lesser prophets, the two Books of Maccabees. The New Testament; viz. the four Evangelists, &c. And if any one shall not receive those whole books with all their parts, for sacred and canonical, according as they are wont to be read in the catholic church, and are contained in the ancient vulgar Latin edition, or shall knowingly and wittingly contemn the foresaid traditions, let him be accursed."

So that the church of Rome hath added to the canon of scripture (truly and properly so called) six whole books, viz. Tobit, Ecclesiasticus, Wisdom, Judith, the First and Second of the Maccabees, together with certain other pieces of Baruch, Esther, and Daniel.

"[b] Mystical benedictions, lights, incensings, garments, and many other such like things, are of apostolical discipline and tradition. The ceremonies used in baptism were, without controversy, instituted by the apostles, such as salt, spittle, exorcisms, wax-candles, catechism." Par. 2. cap. 2. §. 59, 60, 65, &c.

[See below, Articles 19th and 34th of the Church of England.]

"[c] Furthermore, for the restraining all wanton wits, the synod doth decree that no one (depending on his own wisdom, in matters of faith and manners, belonging to the edification of Christian doctrine, wresting the scriptures to his own sense) dare to interpret the holy scripture contrary to the sense which holy mother church hath held, and doth hold, (to whom it belongs to judge of the sense and interpretation of the holy scriptures,) or against the unanimous consent of the Fathers; although such interpretations should never be published."

The index of prohibited books, with the rules made by the Fathers of the Tridentine synod, approved by the authority of Pius IV. an. 1564.

[b] Council Trent, sess. 22. cap. 5.
[c] Sess. 4. Decretum de Edit. et Usu Sacr. Libr.

"[d] Seeing it is manifest by experience, if the holy Bible be permitted to be read every where without difference in the vulgar tongue, that more prejudice than benefit doth redound from thence through the rashness of men; let it therefore be at the pleasure of the bishop or inquisitor, that with the advice of the parish priest or confessor, they may grant the reading of the Bible, translated by catholic authors, to such as they shall understand will by such reading receive no prejudice, but an increase of faith and piety; which license let them have in writing. But whosoever shall without such license presume to read or have such Bibles, he may not have the absolution of his sins before he has returned them to the ordinary."

The same Index being enlarged by Sixtus V, and reviewed and published by order of Clement VIII. anno 1595, there is added the following observation about the foresaid rule:

"It is to be considered about the above written fourth rule of pope Pius IV, that there is no new power given by this impression and edition to the bishops, or inquisitors, or superiors of regulars, of granting a license to buy, read, or keep the Bible published in the vulgar tongue; seeing the power of granting such licenses of reading or keeping vulgar Bibles, or any parts of them, hath been taken away by the command and use of the holy Roman church, and the holy inquisition; as also all summaries and historical compendiums of the said Bibles and books of holy scripture, written in any vulgar tongue; which truly is inviolably to be observed."

So that the power of granting such licenses, and the liberty of reading the scripture in the vulgar tongue[e], is wholly taken away; and accordingly we are told it is so ordered by the general inquisition of Spain.

From all which we may observe,

The Opposition.

The Church of England.	*The Church of Rome.*
1. Holy scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation.	1. All saving truth is in books written, and traditions unwritten.
2. Whatsoever is not read in scripture, nor may be proved	2. The church doth receive and regard unwritten traditions

[d] Regula 4. Quæres.

[e] Azorius Instit. Mor. l. 8. cap. 26. ss. Quæritur; et ss.

thereby, is not to be required of any man to be believed as an article of faith, or to be thought requisite or necessary to salvation.

3. In the name of the holy scripture is understood those canonical books of the Old and New Testament, of whose authority was never any doubt in the church, and the other [the Apocrypha] the church doth not apply to establish any doctrine.

4. The scriptures were intended for, and are to be read by all.

5. The scriptures are useful for all.

6. The church is a witness and keeper of holy writ.

with the like piety and reverence, as the books of the Old and New Testament. And if any one shall knowingly contemn those traditions, he is accursed.

3. The books of scripture are, the five books of Moses, &c. Tobias, Judith, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, the two books of Maccabees, &c. And if any one shall not receive these whole books, with all their parts for canonical, he is accursed.

4. The scriptures ought not to be read by the vulgar.

5. If the Bible is permitted to be read by all, more prejudice than benefit doth arise from it.

6. It belongs to the mother church of Rome, to judge of the sense and interpretation of scripture.

The 7th Article of the Church of England.

Of the Old Testament.

"The Old Testament is not contrary to the New: for both in the Old and New Testament everlasting life is offered to mankind by Christ, who is the only Mediator between God and man, being both God and man."

The Church of Rome.

The Council of Trent.

"† The saints reigning with Christ do offer prayers to God for men, and it is good and profitable to invoke them."

"§ The most holy Mother of God by her intercession doth reconcile God to sinners; she is the Mother of mercy, and Advocatress of the faithful."

† Sess. 25. de Invocat. § Catech. Trid. part. 4. cap. 5. ss. 8.

The Opposition.

The Church of England.	*The Church of Rome.*
Christ is the only mediator between God and man.	The Virgin Mary and saints are mediators in heaven.

See more, Article 22.

The 9th Article of the Church of England.

Of Original or Birth-sin.

"Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam, (as the Pelagians do vainly talk;) but it is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man, that naturally is ingendered of the offspring of Adam," &c.

The Church of Rome.

The Council of Basil.

"[h] We do define and declare, &c. the doctrine that declares the glorious Virgin Mary to have been always free from original and actual sin, holy and immaculate, is to be approved, retained, and embraced by all catholics, as pious and consonant to ecclesiastical worship, the catholic faith, right reason, and holy scripture; and that for the future it shall be lawful for none to preach or teach the contrary."

The Council of Trent.

"[i] This holy synod doth declare, that it is not its intention to comprehend in this decree concerning original sin, the blessed and immaculate Virgin Mary the Mother of God; but that the Constitutions of pope Xystus IV. of happy memory, are to be observed under the penalties therein contained, which it doth enforce."

Of the sense of these two councils in this matter, see Joh. Baptistæ de Lezana Apol. pro immacul. Concept. cap. 13.

The Opposition.

The Church of England.	*The Church of Rome.*
Original sin is the fault and corruption of the nature of every person naturally engendered of the offspring of Adam. So that none is excepted but our blessed Saviour.	The Virgin Mary was free from original and actual sin.

[h] Sess. 36, anno 1439. [i] Sess. 5.

The 11th Article of the Church of England.

Of the Justification of Man.

"We are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by faith, and not for our own works and deservings. Wherefore, that we are justified by faith only is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort, as is more largely expressed in the homily of Justification."

The First Part of the Homily of Salvation.

"Because all men be sinners, and therefore can no man by his own acts, words, and deeds, (seem they never so good,) be justified, and made righteous before God: but every man is constrained to seek for another righteousness or justification, to be received at God's own hands, that is to say, the forgiveness of his sins: and this justification or righteousness, [the forgiveness of our sins,] which we so receive of God's mercy, and Christ's merits embraced by faith, is taken, accepted, and allowed of God for our perfect and full justification.

"Faith doth not shut out repentance, hope, love, dread, and the fear of God, to be joined with faith in every man that is justified, but it shutteth them out from the office of justifying," [that is, meritoriously, as the homily shews.]

The Third Part of the Homily of Salvation.

"The meaning of this proposition or saying, We be justified by faith in Christ only, (according to the meaning of the old ancient authors,) is this, We put our faith in Christ, that we be justified by him only, that we be justified by God's free mercy, and the merits of our Saviour Christ only, and by no virtue or good works of our own."

The Church of Rome.

The Council of Trent.

"[1] Justification is not only the remission of sins, but the sanctification and renovation of the inward man, from whence a man of unjust is made just. If any one shall say, [2] that men are justified, either by the only imputation of Christ's righteousness, or by the alone remission of our sins, excluding the grace and love which is spread in their hearts by the Holy

[1] Sess. 6. cap. 7. [2] Can. 11.

Ghost, and doth inhere in them; or that the grace by which we are justified is only the favour of God; let him be accursed."

"[m] It is called *our righteousness*, because we are justified by it, inhering in us."

"[n] If any one shall say, that the wicked is justified by faith alone, so that he understands nothing else to be required, which may cooperate to obtain the grace of justification, and that it is not at all necessary that he be prepared and disposed by the motion of his own will; let him be accursed."

The Opposition.

The Church of England,	*The Church of Rome,*
1. Placeth the nature of justification in the forgiveness of sin.	1. Saith, justification is not only the forgiveness of sin, but also that it is the sanctification of our natures, [confounding justification with sanctification,] and that whoever holds the contrary is accursed.
2. Saith, we are accounted righteous only for the merit of Christ.	2. Saith, we are justified by a righteousness inhering in us.

The 12th Article of the Church of England.

Of Good Works.

"Albeit that good works, which are the fruits of faith, and follow after justification, cannot put away our sins, and endure the severity of God's judgment; yet are they pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, and do spring out necessarily of a true and lively faith; insomuch that by them a lively faith may be as evidently known as a tree discerned by the fruit."

Homily of Good Works. And first of Fasting.

"To have any affiance, or to put any confidence in our works, as by merit and deserving of them to purchase to ourselves and others remission of sin, and so consequently everlasting life, is mere blasphemy of God's mercy, and great derogation to the bloodshedding of our Saviour Jesus Christ."

[m] Cap. 16. [n] Can. 9.

Sermon of Salvation, part 3.

"Our own imperfection is so great, through the corruption of original sin, that all is unperfect that is within us. Faith, charity, hope, dread, thoughts, words, and works; and therefore not apt to merit or deserve any part of our justification for us."

The Church of Rome.

The Council of Trent.

"[n] Justified persons are esteemed to have truly deserved eternal life."

"[o] If any one shall say, The good works of the justified are so the gifts of God, that they are not also the good merits of the person justified; or that by the good works which are done by him, through the grace of God and merit of Christ, he doth not truly merit an increase of grace, eternal life, and the obtaining of eternal life, (if he shall depart in grace,) and also an increase of glory, let him be accursed."

The Rhemists' Annotations.

"[p] This place conviucetli for the catholics, that all good works done by God's grace after the first justification, be truly and properly meritorious, and fully worthy of everlasting life; and that thereupon heaven is the due and just stipend, crown or recompense, which God by his justice oweth to the persons so working by his grace; for he rendereth or repayeth heaven as a just Judge, and not only as a merciful giver; and the crown which he payeth, is not only of mercy or favour or grace, but also of justice."

The Opposition.

The Church of England.	*The Church of Rome.*
1. The best works are imperfect, and cannot endure the severity of God's judgment.	1. The good works of the justified do truly merit eternal life.
2. To put any confidence in our works, and to think they merit everlasting life, is blasphemy.	2. Whosoever saith they do not properly merit, is accursed.

[n] Sess. 6. cap. 16.
[o] Can. 32.

[p] Annot. in 2 Tim. iv. 8; 1 Cor. iii. 8; and Heb. vi. 10.

The 13th Article of the Church of England.

Of Works before Justification.

"Works done before the grace of Christ, and the inspiration of his Spirit, are not pleasant to God, forasmuch as they spring not of faith in Jesus Christ, neither do they make men meet to receive grace, or (as school-authors say) deserve grace of congruity: [q] yea rather, for that they are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not but they have the nature of sin."

The Church of Rome.

It was a common opinion in the church of Rome, that works done before the grace of Christ do make men meet to deserve grace of congruity, or that man by the power of nature can dispose himself for justification. Of this opinion were Scotus, Durandus, Biel, Cajetan, &c.

Council of Trent.

"[r] If any one shall say, that all works before justification, for whatever reason they are done, are truly sins, or deserve the hatred of God, let him be accursed."

The Opposition.

The Church of England.	*The Church of Rome.*
1. Works done before justification do not deserve grace of congruity.	1. Works done before justification do merit it of congruity.
2. Works done before justification have the nature of sin.	2. Whoever shall say, works done before justification are truly sins, is accursed.

The 14th Article of the Church of England.

Of Works of Supererogation.

"Voluntary works besides, over and above, God's commandments, which they call *works of supererogation*, cannot be taught without arrogancy and impiety: for by them men do declare, that they do not only render unto God as much as they are bound to do, but that they do more for his sake than of bounden duty is required: whereas Christ saith plainly, *When ye have done all that are commanded to you, say, We are unprofitable servants.*"

[q] See Bishop Usher's Answer to a Challenge, chap. 11. [r] Sess. 6. cap. 7.

Second Part of the Sermon of Good Works.

"Which sects and religions in the church of Rome had so many hypocritical and feigned works, in their state of religion, (as they arrogantly named it,) that their lamps (as they said) run always over, able to satisfy, not only for their own sins, but also for all their benefactors, brothers and sisters of religion, as most ungodlily and trustily they had persuaded the multitude of ignorant people; keeping in divers places, as it were marts or markets of merit, being full of their holy relics, images, shrines, and works of overflowing abundance, ready to be sold."

The Church of Rome.

The Catechism.

"[s] In this the goodness and clemency of God is to be praised, who hath granted to our weakness, that one may satisfy for another, &c. And such as are endued with Divine grace can pay in the name of another what is due to God."

Rhemists' Annotations.

"[t] The works which we do more than precept be called works of supererogation; and whereby [that is, from what was abovesaid] it is also evident against the protestants that there be such works."

"[u] This place proveth plainly, that the fastings and satisfactory deeds of one man be available to others. Yea, and that holy saints or other virtuous persons may, in measure and proportion of other men's necessities and deservings, allot unto them as well the supererogation of their spiritual works, as those that abound in worldly goods may give alms of their superfluities to them which are in necessity."

"[x] We infer most assuredly, that the satisfactory and penal works of holy saints suffered in this life, be communicable and applicable to the use of other faithful men, and to be dispensed according to every man's necessity and deserving, by them whom Christ hath constituted over his family, and hath made the dispensers of his treasures."

The Opposition.

The Church of England.	*The Church of Rome.*
1. That men may do more for	1. That men may do works of

[s] Pars 2. de Sacram. Pœnit. ss. 77.
[t] Luke xi. 35.
[u] 2 Cor. viii. 14.
[x] Annot. in 2 Cor. ii. 10.

God's sake than of bounden duty is required, cannot be taught without arrogancy and impiety.

2. That any may be able not only to satisfy for their own sins, but also for the sins of others, is a most ungodly doctrine.

supererogation, and more than is commanded.

2. That what they do more than is commanded, may be allotted to others, and which such may have the benefit of.

The 15th Article of the Church of England.

Of Christ alone without Sin.

"Christ in the truth of our nature was made like unto us in all things, sin only except, from which he was clearly void, both in his flesh and in his spirit, &c. But all we the rest, although baptized, and born again in Christ, yet offend in many things; and *if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.*"

The Church of Rome.

The Council of Trent.

"[y] If any one shall say, that any one can avoid all sins, such also as are venial, in the whole course of his life, except by special privilege from God, as the church doth hold concerning the blessed Virgin, let him be accursed."

The Rhemists.

"[z] Our Lady had so much grace given her that she never sinned, not so much as venially, in all her life."

The Opposition.

The Church of England.	*The Church of Rome.*
Christ alone is without sin, but all the rest of mankind offend in many things, none being excepted.	The Virgin Mary is excepted, having never sinned so much as venially.

The 19th Article of the Church of England.

Of the Church.

"The visible church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in the which the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments be duly ministered according to Christ's ordinance in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same.

y Sess. 6. can. 23. z Annot. on Mar. iii. 34.

" As the church of Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Antioch have erred; so also the church of Rome hath erred, not only in their living and manner of ceremonies, but also in matters of faith."

§. 1. *Of the Church.*

The visible church is where the word of God is preached, and the sacraments be duly ministered, in all things of necessity requisite.

The Church of Rome.

The 5th General Council of Lateran.

" [a] The sacred doctors have affirmed, that the unity of the church doth consist in two things: 1. in the conjunction of the members of the church one with another: 2. in their order to one head, the vicar of Christ, according to the saying of the apostle, *Not holding the head.*"

The Catechism of the Council of Trent.

Of the Notes of the true Church.

" [b] The first note is, That it be one. And it is called one, as there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism. There is one governor, the invisible, Christ; the visible, who (being the lawful successor of Peter, prince of the apostles) doth possess the Roman chair.

The Opposition.

The Church of England.	*The Church of Rome.*
The notes of a true church are, the pure word preached and the due ministration of the sacraments.	The necessary note of the true church is the being united to the bishop of Rome.

§. 2. *Of the Fallibility of the Church of Rome.*

[c] The church of Rome hath erred, as well as other churches, in living, ceremonies, and faith.

The Church of Rome hath erred in Ceremonies.

[d] *The Common Prayer Book.*

" Of such ceremonies as be used in the church, and have had their beginning by the institution of man, some are put away, because the great excess and multitude of them hath so

[a] Orat. Archiep. Spalat.
[b] Par. 1. de 9 Art. Symb. ss. 11.
[c] N. 1.
[d] Rubric, of Ceremonies, why some be abolished, &c.

increased in these latter days, that the burden of them was intolerable. This our excessive multitude of ceremonies was so great, and many of them so dark, that they did more confound than declare and set forth Christ's benefits unto us. Furthermore, the most weighty cause of the abolishment of some ceremonies was, that they were so far abused, partly by the superstitious blindness of the rude and unlearned, and partly by the unsatiable avarice," &c.

The Second Part of the Homily of Place and Time of Prayer.

" They have profaned and defiled their churches with heathenish and Jewish abuses, with images and idols, with numbers of altars, too, too superstitiously and intolerably abused, with gross abusing and filthy corrupting of the Lord's holy supper, the blessed sacrament of his body and blood, with an infinite number of toys and trifles, of their own devices, to make a goodly outward show, and to deface the plain, simple, and sincere religion of Christ."

The Church of Rome.

The Council of Trent.

" [e] The church has appointed ceremonies, as mystical benedictions, lights, incensings, garments, and such like, that the majesty of so great a sacrifice might be recommended, and the minds of the faithful be excited," &c.

" [f] If any one shall say, that the ceremonies, garments, and external signs, which the catholic church doth use in the celebration of mass, are rather incitements of impiety than helps to piety, let him be accursed."

" [g] If any one shall say, they are injurious to the Holy Spirit that give some virtue to the holy chrism of confirmation, let him be accursed."

The Catechism.

" [h] The sacrifice of the mass hath many, and those very remarkable and solemn rites; none of which is to be esteemed needless and vain."

The Opposition.

The Church of England.	*The Church of Rome.*
1. The ceremonies in the	1. The ceremonies used are

[e] Sess. 22. c. 5.
[f] Ibid. can. 7.
[g] Sess. 7. can. 2.
[h] Par 2. cap. 4. de Euchar. ss. 81.

church of Rome were for their multitude an intolerable burden.

2. They do more confound than set forth Christ's benefits, and do deface the plain and sincere religion of Christ.

3. They are toys and trifles.

4. They do profane and defile the churches where they are used.

many, but solemn, and for the majesty of worship.

2. They do recommend the worship, and excite the minds of the faithful.

3. None of them are needless and vain; but have a virtue in them.

4. Whosoever shall say, that they are incitements of impiety, is accursed.

See Articles 6th and 34th.

[i] *The Church of Rome hath erred in Matters of Faith.*

The Second Part of the Homily concerning the Holy Ghost.

"If ye will compare the notes of a true church with the church of Rome, as it is presently, and hath been for the space of nine hundred years and odd; you shall well perceive the state thereof to be so far wide from the nature of the true church, that nothing can be more: where is then the Holy Ghost, which they do so stoutly claim to themselves? Where is now the Spirit of truth, that will not suffer them in any wise to err? &c. It is but a vain brag, and nothing else."

The Church of Rome.

The Council of Trent.

"[k] The holy synod, delivering that sound and sincere doctrine, which the catholic church being taught by Jesus Christ himself, and the apostles, and by the Holy Spirit suggesting all truth from day to day to her, hath retained, and will preserve to the end of the world, doth straightly charge all the faithful of Christ, that they dare not after this believe or teach otherwise concerning the holy eucharist than is explained and defined in this decree."

The Catechism.

"[l] The church cannot err in delivering the discipline of faith and manners."

[i] N. 2. [k] Sess. 13. init. [l] Par. 1. de 9. Artic. Symb. ss. 18.

The Rhemists' Annotations.

"[m] By this promise we are assured that no heresies or other wicked attempts can prevail against the church builded upon Peter, which the Fathers call *Peter's see* and *the Roman church.*"

The Opposition.

The Church of England.	*The Church of Rome.*
1. The church of Rome hath erred in matters of faith.	1. The church of Rome cannot err in matters of faith.
2. The pretence of the church of Rome to infallibility is nothing but a vain brag.	2. The church of Rome is guided by the Holy Spirit from day to day, and cannot err.

The 20th Article of the Church of England.

Of the Authority of the Church.

"It is not lawful for the church to ordain any thing that is contrary to God's word written, &c.—Wherefore, although the church be a witness and keeper of holy writ, yet, as it ought not to decree any thing against the same, so besides the same ought it not to enforce any thing to be believed for necessity of salvation."

The Church of Rome.

The Council of Constance.

"[n] Although Christ hath instituted and did administer the sacrament of the eucharist in bread and wine, yet this notwithstanding, the authority of the sacred canons and the approved custom of the church is to be preserved, that it be not received after supper, &c. And likewise, that although the sacrament was received in both kinds in the primitive church, yet the custom is reasonably introduced, that the laics receive in one kind, &c. And we do command that no presbyter do communicate the people in both."

The Council of Trent.

"[o] This holy synod being taught by the Holy Spirit doth declare and teach, that laymen are obliged by no Divine precept to receive in both kinds, and that communion in one is sufficient for salvation."

"[p] Furthermore she declares, that this power hath always been in the church, that in dispensing the sacraments (the

m On Matt. xvi. 18. n Sess. 13. o Sess 21. cap. 1. p Ibid. cap. 2.

substance of them being preserved) she might appoint and change those things which she doth judge more expedient for the profit of the receivers and the reverence of the sacrament, &c. Wherefore holy mother church acknowledging [avowing] this her authority, &c. for weighty and just causes doth decree, that the eucharist be communicated in one kind."

1. *General Council of Lateran.*

"[9] We do altogether forbid presbyters, deacons, and monks to contract matrimony; and we do determine that marriages so contracted be disjoined."

The Creed of Pius IV.

In which it is declared, that the church of Rome is the mother and mistress of all other churches. That the pope is successor to St. Peter, and vicar of Christ. That in the mass is a real transubstantiation of the elements into the body and blood of Christ, &c. And that all things professed in that Creed are the catholic faith, "out of which no man can be saved."

The Opposition.

The Church of England,	*The Church of Rome.*
1. Saith, that it is not lawful for the church to ordain any thing contrary to God's written word.	1. The church of Rome hath ordained things contrary to God's written word; as, in requiring the sacrament to be administered in one kind; in forbidding and disannulling the marriage of priests.
2. The church ought not to enforce any thing besides the written word to be believed for necessity of salvation.	2. The church of Rome doth require things, at least, besides the word, to be believed as necessary to salvation; as that the pope is vicar of Christ, and St. Peter's successor; that there are properly and truly seven sacraments instituted by Christ, &c.

The 21*st Article of the Church of England.*

Of the Authority of General Councils.

"General councils may not be gathered together without

[9] Cap. 21

the commandment and will of princes; and when they be gathered together (forasmuch as they be an assembly of men, whereof all be not governed with the spirit and word of God) they may err, and sometime have erred in things pertaining unto God. Wherefore things ordained by them as necessary to salvation have neither strength nor authority, unless it may be declared that they be taken out of holy scripture."

The Church of Rome.

Council of Trent.

"[r] It belongs to the popes to call and direct general councils.

"The holy universal and general synod of Trent, lawfully gathered together in the Holy Ghost—taught by the Holy Spirit, which is a Spirit of wisdom and understanding, &c., doth declare and teach."

The Rhemists' Annotations.

"[s] To teach all truth, and preserve in truth and from error, the Holy Ghost is promised and performed only to the church, and the chief governor and general councils thereof.

"[t] The holy councils lawfully kept, &c., have ever the assistance of God's Spirit, and therefore cannot err in their sentences and determinations concerning the same, because the Holy Ghost cannot err, from whom, as you see here, jointly with the council the resolution proceedeth."

The Opposition.

The Church of England.	*The Church of Rome.*
1. General councils may not be gathered without the command and will of princes.	1. It belongs to the pope to call general councils.
2. General councils have erred, and may err.	2. General councils called by the pope cannot err.

The 22nd Article of the Church of England.

Of Purgatory.

"The Romish doctrine concerning purgatory, pardons, worshipping and adoration, as well of images as of relics, and also invocation of saints, is a fond thing vainly invented, and

[r] Sess. 11. Bulla resump. et decretum de resump. conc. sess. 21. init. et cap. 1.
[s] Rhem. Annot. Joh. xvi. 13.
[t] On Acts xvi. 28.

grounded upon no warranty of scripture, but rather repugnant to the word of God."

§. I. *Purgatory.*

The Romish doctrine concerning purgatory is a fond thing vainly invented, and grounded upon no warranty of scripture, &c.

Third part of the Homily concerning Prayer.

"If we will cleave only unto the word of God, then we must needs grant that we have no commandment to pray for them that are departed out of this world. For the scripture doth acknowledge but two places after this life. The one proper to the elect and blessed of God, the other to the reprobate.

"There is no place for repentance, nor yet for satisfaction.—As the scripture teacheth us, let us think, that the soul of man passing out of the body goeth straightways to heaven, or else to hell, whereof the one needeth no prayer, the other is without redemption."

The Church of Rome.

The Council of Trent.

"[u] Seeing it hath been lately taught in this universal synod from scripture, &c. that there is a purgatory, and that the souls there detained are helped by the suffrages of the faithful, but most of all by the acceptable sacrifice of the altar; the holy synod doth command the bishops, that they take diligent care, that the sound doctrine concerning purgatory be believed, taught, &c.

"[x] If any one shall say, that the fault is so remitted to every penitent sinner, that there remains no guilt to be paid for in purgatory, before there be an entrance granted into the kingdom of heaven, let him be accursed.

"[y] If any one shall say, that the sacrifice of the mass ought not to be offered for the dead, &c., let him be accursed."

The Opposition.

The Church of England.	*The Church of Rome.*
1. The Romish doctrine concerning purgatory is a fond thing vainly invented.	1. The doctrine of purgatory is necessary to be believed, and whosoever doth not believe it is accursed.

[u] Sess. 25. decret. de Purgat. [x] Sess. 6. can. 30. [y] Sess. 22. can. 3.

2. It is grounded upon no warranty of scripture, but rather is repugnant to it.	2. It is taught from scripture.

§. II. *Pardons.*

The Romish doctrine concerning pardons is a fond thing vainly invented, &c.

The Church of Rome.

Rhemists' Annotations.

" [z] To restore offenders to the church's sacraments and communion of the faithful, to pardon also either all or part of the penance enjoined, or what debts soever man oweth to God or the church for the satisfaction of his sins forgiven, is called *indulgence*."

First General Council of Lateran.

" [a] We do grant remission of their sins to whosoever do go to Jerusalem, and shall efficaciously afford their help to oppose the infidels."

Fourth General Council of Lateran.

" [b] The catholics that, having taken upon them the character of the cross, shall address themselves to the destruction of heretics, enjoy that indulgence, and are armed with the same privilege which is granted to those that go to the relief of the holy land."

The Council of Constance.

" [c] The holy synod doth grant to every one that goes in the appointed procession, an hundred days of indulgence, &c.; and to those that once a day say devoutly a *Pater Noster* and *Ave Maria* for the safety of the emperor, forty days of indulgence, in the accustomed form of the church."

The Council of Trent.

" [d] Indulgences are the heavenly treasures of the church. Seeing the power of indulgences hath been granted by Christ to the church, this holy synod doth teach, that the use of them is very wholesome to Christian people, and doth command that they be retained in the church, and doth condemn them by an anathema that affirm them to be unprofitable, or deny that the church hath a power to grant them."

z On Matt. xvi. 19.
a Can. 11.
b Can. 3.
c Sess. 16.
d Sess. 21. cap. 9. sess5. Decret. de indulg.

The Opposition.

The Church of England.	*The Church of Rome.*
1. The Romish doctrine concerning indulgence is grounded upon no warrant of scripture.	1. The power of indulgences was granted by Christ.
2. It is a fond thing, and vainly invented.	2. They are wholesome to Christian people; and whosoever shall affirm them to be unprofitable is accursed.

§. III. *Of Images and Relics.*

THE Romish doctrine concerning the adoration, as well of images as of relics, is a fond thing, vainly invented, &c.

Second part of the Homily against Idolatry.

"Images and image-worship were in the primitive church (which was most pure and uncorrupt) abhorred and detested, as abominable and contrary to all true Christian religion."

Third part of the Homily against Images, &c.

"Let such as fall down before images of saints know and confess, that they exhibit that honour to dead stocks and stones which the saints themselves, Peter, Paul, and Barnabas, would not be given to them when alive, &c.

"In this they pass the folly and wickedness of the Gentiles, that they honour and worship the relics and the bones of our saints; which prove that they be mortal men and dead, and therefore no gods to be worshipped, which the gentiles would never confess of their gods for very shame; but the relics we must kiss and offer to, especially on relics Sunday."

The Church of Rome.

The Council of Trent.

"[c] The holy synod doth command all bishops and others, whose office it is to teach, that they instruct the faithful, according to the use of the catholic and apostolic church, received from the first times of the Christian religion, concerning the honour of relics and the lawful use of images.

"The synod doth decree, that the images of Christ, the Virgin Mother of God, and other saints, are to be had and re-

[c] Sess. 25. de Invocat.

tained, especially in churches, and that due honour and veneration be given to them, &c., and when we kiss them, uncover the head, and fall down before them, we do adore Christ, and venerate the saints, whose similitude they bear.

"They are altogether to be condemned, and the church doth condemn them, that do deny the bodies of the saints and martyrs are to be venerated by the faithful; and that affirm that veneration and honour is not due to their relics, or that they are unprofitably honoured, &c.

"Whosoever shall teach or think any thing contrary to these decrees, let him be accursed."

The Opposition.

The Church of England.	*The Church of Rome.*
1. Image-worship was abhorred in the primitive church.	1. Image-worship was received from the first times of Christianity.
2. The Romish doctrine of worshipping images and relics is a fond thing, &c.	2. The relics of the saints are to be venerated; and such as affirm they are not profitably honoured, are to be condemned.
3. It is grounded upon no scripture, but is repugnant thereto.	3. Whosoever shall teach or think they are not to be venerated, is accursed.

§. IV. *Invocation of Saints.*

Invocation of saints is a fond thing, vainly invented, and grounded upon no warranty of scripture, &c.

Second part of the Homily concerning Prayer.

"There are certain conditions most requisite to be found in every one that must be called upon; which if not found, our prayer doth avail us nothing. As, 1. That he to whom we pray be able to help us; 2. That he will; 3. That he hear our prayer; 4. That he understand better than we ourselves what we lack. If these things be to be found in any other, saving only in God, then may we lawfully call upon some other besides God. But what man is so gross, but that he well understandeth that those things are only proper to him which is omnipotent, and knoweth all things, that is to say, only to God alone? whereof it followeth, that we must call neither upon angel nor yet upon saint, but only and solely upon God."

Third part of the Homily against Idolatry.

"If answer be made, that they make such saints but intercessors to God, &c.; that is, after the Gentiles' idolatrous usage, to make them of saints, gods, called *dii mediocrumi*," &c.

The Church of Rome.

The Council of Trent.

"[f] The holy synod doth command bishops and others, that have the office of teaching, that they teach the faithful, that the saints reigning with Christ do offer prayers to God for men, and that it is good and profitable to invoke them; and for the obtaining of benefits to have recourse by Jesus Christ, our only Redeemer, to their prayers, aid, and help. But those that deny that they are to be invocated, or affirm that they do not pray for us; or that the invocation of them, that they may pray for every one of us, is idolatry, and is contrary to the word of God, and the honour of one Mediator Jesus Christ, do think wickedly.

"If any one doth think or teach contrary to these doctrines, let him be accursed."

The Catechism of Trent.

"[g] We do fly to the most holy Mother of God, that by her intercession she may reconcile God to sinners.——We ought to call upon her, the Mother of mercy and Advocatress of faithful people, that she may pray for us sinners, &c. of which no one can, unless impiously and cursedly, doubt."

The Opposition.

The Church of England.	*The Church of Rome.*
1. Invocation of saints is a fond thing.	1. Invocation of saints is good and profitable.
2. It is repugnant to the word of God.	2. They who say it is contrary to the word of God, think wickedly.
3. To make them intercessors is idolatrous.	3. Whosoever shall say it is idolatry, thinks wickedly, and is accursed.

[f] Sess. 25. de Invocat.

[g] Par. 4. cap. 5. ss. 8.

The 23d Article of the Church of England.

Of Ministering in the Congregation.

The Opposition.

The Church of England.

"It is not lawful for any man to take upon himself the office, &c. of ministering the sacraments in the congregation, before he be lawfully called, and sent to execute the same. And those we ought to judge lawfully called and sent, which be chosen, and called to this work by men who have public authority, &c."

The Church of Rome.

"In necessity, any of the people may baptize, whether men or women, of whatsoever sect, Jews, infidels, and heretics; if they intend thereby to do that which the catholic church intends to do." Catechism of Trent, part 2. cap. 11. sect. 24.

The 24th Article of the Church of England.

Of Speaking in the Congregation in such a Tongue as the People understandeth.

The Opposition.

The Church of England.

"It is a thing plainly repugnant to the word of God, and the custom of the primitive church, to have public prayer in the church, or to minister the sacraments, in a tongue not understood of the people."

See the homily of Common Prayer and the Sacraments.

The Church of Rome.

"It seemed not fit to the Fathers that the mass be every where celebrated in the vulgar tongue. Wherefore the ancient rite is every where to be retained. Whosoever shall say that the mass ought to be celebrated only in the vulgar tongue, let him be accursed." Council of Trent, sess. 22. cap. 8. and can. 9.

The 25th Article of the Church of England.

Of the Sacraments.

"There are two sacraments ordained of Christ our Lord in the gospel; that is to say, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord.

"[h] Those five commonly called *sacraments*, that is to say,

[h] See the Homily of Common Prayer and the Sacraments.

Confirmation, Penance, Orders, Matrimony, and Extreme Unction, are not to be counted for sacraments of the gospel, being such as have grown partly of the corrupt following of the apostles, partly are states of life allowed in the scriptures, but yet have not like nature of sacraments with baptism and the Lord's supper, for that they have not any visible sign or ceremony ordained of God. The sacraments were not ordained of Christ to be gazed upon, or to be carried about, but that we should duly use them. And in such only as worthily receive the same, they have a wholesome effect or operation, &c. There shall be no celebration of the Lord's supper, except there be a convenient number to communicate with the priest[i]," &c.

The Church of Rome.

The Council of Trent.

"[k] If any one shall say, that the sacraments of the new law have not been all instituted by Christ, or that they are more or fewer than seven, viz. Baptism, Confirmation, the Eucharist, Penance, Extreme Unction, Orders, and Matrimony; or that any of these seven is not truly and properly a sacrament, let him be accursed.

"[l] If any one shall say that grace is not conferred [*ex opere operato*] by the work done in the sacraments of the new law; but that only faith in the Divine promise is sufficient to obtain grace; let him be accursed.

"[m] The synod doth approve and commend those masses in which the priest doth communicate alone; forasmuch as they ought to be esteemed truly common; partly, because the people do spiritually communicate; and partly they are celebrated for all the faithful by a public minister of the church.

"[n] If any one shall say, that the masses in which the priest alone doth sacramentally communicate are unlawful, and so to be abrogated, let him be accursed."

The Opposition.

The Church of England.	*The Church of Rome.*
1. There are but two sacraments ordained of Christ.	There are seven sacraments truly and properly.

[i] Rubric after the Communion Service. [k] Sess. 7. can. 1. [l] Can. 8.
[m] Sess. 22. cap. 6. [n] Can. 8.

2. The other called *sacraments* are either corruptions or states of life, but have not the nature of sacraments.

3. The sacraments in such only as worthily receive the same have a wholesome effect and operation.

4. The sacraments were not ordained to be gazed upon, but to be used.

2. Whosoever shall say, that any of the seven are not properly and truly sacraments, is accursed.

3. The sacraments do confer grace *ex opere operato*, and whosoever denies it, is accursed.

4. Masses in which the priest alone sacramentally communicates to be approved: and whosoever doth say they are unlawful, is accursed.

The 28th Article of the Church of England.

Of the Lord's Supper.

"Transubstantiation (or the change of the substance of bread and wine) in the supper of the Lord cannot be proved by holy writ; but it is repugnant to the plain words of scripture, overthroweth the nature of a sacrament, and hath given occasion to many superstitions. The body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten in the supper only after an heavenly and spiritual manner: and the mean, whereby the body of Christ is received and eaten in the supper, is faith.

"The sacrament of the Lord's Supper was not by Christ's ordinance reserved, carried about, lifted up, and worshipped.

Rubric at the end of the Communion Service.

"No adoration ought to be done, either unto the sacramental bread and wine there bodily received, or unto any corporal presence of Christ's natural flesh and blood. For the sacramental bread and wine remain still in their very natural substances, and therefore may not be adored (for that were idolatry to be abhorred of all faithful Christians). And the natural body and blood of our Saviour Christ are in heaven, and not here; it being against the truth of Christ's natural body to be at one time in more places than one."

The Church of Rome.

The 4th General Council of Lateran.

"[o] The body and blood of Christ are truly contained in the

[o] Can. 1.

sacrament of the altar, under the species of bread and wine; the bread being transubstantiated into the body, and the wine into the blood, by the power of God," &c.

The Council of Trent.

"[p] Whosoever shall deny that the body and blood, together with the soul and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, and so whole Christ, is contained in the sacrament of the eucharist, let him be accursed.

"[q] Whosoever shall deny that wonderful and singular conversion of the whole substance of the bread into the body, and of the whole substance of the wine into the blood, the species only of bread and wine remaining; which conversion the catholic church most aptly calls *transubstantiation*; let him be accursed.

"[r] If any one shall say, that the body and blood of Christ is only in use, not before and after; and that the true body of Christ doth not remain in the particles of it reserved after the communion, let him be accursed.

"[s] If any one shall say, that Christ is not to be worshipped in the eucharist with Divine worship, &c., or that he is not solemnly to be carried about, and shewed to the people that he may be worshipped, and that the worshippers are idolaters, let him be accursed.

"[t] If any one shall say, that Christ is only eaten spiritually, let him be accursed."

The Opposition.

The Church of England.	*The Church of Rome.*
1. The sacramental bread and wine after consecration remain in their very natural substances.	1. There are after consecration only the species of the bread and wine in the eucharist: and the substance of bread and wine is converted into the body and blood of Christ.
2. The natural body and blood of Christ are in heaven, and not here.	2. The body and blood of Christ, together with his soul and divinity, is contained in the eucharist.
3. Transubstantiation is repugnant to the plain words of scripture, &c.	3 Whosoever shall deny transubstantiation, is accursed.

[p] Sess. 13. cap. 1. and can. 1. [q] Cap. 4. and can. 2. [r] Can. 4. [s] Can. 6. [t] Can. 8.

4. The body and blood of Christ is in the supper only eaten after an heavenly and spiritual manner.

4. Whosoever shall say, Christ is eaten only spiritually, is accursed.

5. The sacrament of the Lord's Supper was not by Christ's ordinance reserved.

5. Whosoever shall say, that the body and blood of Christ is only in use, and remains not in what is reserved, is accursed.

6. The sacramental bread and wine may not be adored, for that is idolatry.

6. If any shall say, the host is not to be worshipped, or that to worship it is idolatry, he is accursed.

So that the church of England is upon this article under six anathemas at least, of the church of Rome, as appears.

The 29th Article of the Church of England.

Of the Wicked, which eat not the Body of Christ in the Use of the Lord's Supper.

The Opposition.

The Church of England.

"The wicked, and such as be void of a lively faith, although they do carnally and visibly press with their teeth (as St. Augustin saith) the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ; yet in no wise are they partakers of Christ," &c.

The Church of Rome.

"Ill men receive the body and blood of Christ, be they infidels or ill livers." Rhem. Annot. in 1 Cor. xi. 27.

The 30th Article of the Church of England.

Of both Kinds.

"The cup of the Lord is not to be denied to the lay people. For both the parts of the Lord's sacrament ought by Christ's ordinance and commandment to be ministered to all Christian men alike."

The Church of Rome.

The Council of Trent.

"[u] Although our Redeemer hath instituted the sacrament in his last supper, and hath delivered unto the apostles in both kinds; yet it is to be confessed, that whole and entire Christ,

[u] Sess. 21. cap. 3.

and a true sacrament is taken under one kind only; and furthermore, that as to the benefit of it, they are defrauded of no grace necessary to salvation, who receive only in one kind.

" [x] The synod hath decreed, That it should be received for a law, that the sacrament be administered in one kind.

" [y] Whosoever shall say, that by the command of God all the faithful ought to receive in both kinds, let him be accursed.

" [z] Whosoever shall say, that the holy catholic church hath not been induced, for just causes and reasons, to order that lay people, and priests not officiating, should communicate only under the species of bread; or that she hath erred therein, let him be accursed.

" [a] Whosoever shall deny whole and entire Christ to be taken under one species, let him be accursed."

The Opposition.

The Church of England.	*The Church of Rome.*
1. The cup is not to be denied to the lay people.	1. The cup for just reasons is denied to the lay people.
2. The ministration in one kind is but part of a sacrament.	2. Whole Christ and an whole sacrament is under one kind only.
3. The sacrament ought to be administered in both kinds, according to Christ's commandment.	3. Whosoever shall say, that the people ought to receive in both kinds by the command of God, is accursed.

The 31st Article of the Church of England.

Of the one Oblation of Christ, finished upon the Cross.

" The offering of Christ once made is that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world, both original and actual, and there is none other satisfaction for sin but that alone. Wherefore the sacrifices of masses, in which it is commonly said that the priest did offer Christ for the quick and the dead, to have remission of pain or guilt, were blasphemous fables and dangerous deceits."

The Church of Rome.

The Council of Trent.

" [b] Because in this divine sacrifice, which is performed in

[x] Cap. 2. [y] Can. 1. [z] Can. 2. [a] Can. 3. [b] Sess. 2. cap. 2.

the mass, the selfsame Christ is contained, and unbloodily offered, that offered himself once upon the altar of the cross; the holy synod doth teach, That that sacrifice is truly propitiatory.

"It is rightly offered, not only for the sins, punishments, and satisfactions, and other necessities of the faithful living, but also for the dead in Christ, not as yet fully purged, according to the tradition of the apostles.

"[c] If any one shall say, that there is not offered to God in the mass a true and proper sacrifice, let him be accursed.

"[d] If any one shall say, the sacrifice of the mass is not propitiatory; and that it profits him that takes it only; and that it ought not to be offered for the living and dead, for sins, punishments, satisfactions, and other necessities, let him be accursed.

"[e] If any one shall say, that by the sacrifice of the mass there is blasphemy offered to the sacrifice of Christ upon the cross; or that thereby any thing is derogated from him, let him be accursed."

The Opposition.

The Church of England.	*The Church of Rome.*
1. The offering of Christ as a propitiation was but once.	1. In the mass there is a propitiatory sacrifice offered daily.
2. To say that the priest offers for the living and the dead in the mass, is blasphemous fables and dangerous deceits.	2. Whoever denies that Christ is offered for the living and dead, or shall say that Christ and his sacrifice is thereby blasphemed, is accursed.

The 32d Article of the Church of England.

Of the Marriage of Priests.

"Bishops, priests, and deacons are not commanded by God's law either to vow the estate of single life, or to abstain from marriage; therefore it is lawful also for them, as for all other Christian men, to marry at their own discretion, as they shall judge the same to serve better to godliness."

Second Part of the Homily of good Works.

"This pharisaical and papistical leaven, of man's feigned religion [in monastical vows], which although it were before God

[c] Can. 1. [d] Can. 3. [e] Can. 4.

most abominable and contrary to God's commandments and Christ's pure religion, yet it was praised to be a most godly life, and the highest state of perfection."

The Church of Rome.

First General Council of Lateran.

"[f] We do altogether forbid presbyters, deacons, and monks to have concubines, or to contract matrimony; and according to the definitions of sacred canons, we do decree that marriages so contracted be separated, and that the persons ought to be brought to penance."

The Second General Council of Lateran.

"[g] We do decree, that they who, being in the order of subdeacon and above, have married wives, and had concubines, shall not have an ecclesiastical benefice; for seeing they are the temple of God, &c., it is a shameful thing that they should serve beds and uncleannesses."

The Council of Trent.

"[h] If any one shall say, that matrimony confirmed, not consummated, is not dissolved by the solemn profession of religion of either party, let him be accursed.

"[i] If any one shall say, that clerks in holy orders, or regulars, having solemnly professed chastity, may contract matrimony, and that so contracted it is valid, notwithstanding any ecclesiastical law, and vow, &c; and that all may contract matrimony who perceive they have not the gift of chastity, though they have vowed it; let him be accursed."

The Opposition.

The Church of England.	*The Church of Rome.*
1. The marriage of priests is lawful.	1. Priests ought not to marry; and if they marry, are to be separated.
2. The marriage of priests may serve to godliness	2. The marriage of priests is a defiling the temple of God.
3. To vow against marriage, especially upon the account of perfection and purity, is a feigned religion, and contrary to God's commandment.	3. Vows against marriage do oblige, though the persons have not the gift of continency.

[f] Cap. 21 [g] Can. 6. [h] Sess. 24. can. 6. [i] Can 9.

The 34th Article of the Church of England.

Of the Traditions of the Church.

"It is not necessary that traditions and ceremonies be in all places one or utterly like, for at all times they have been diverse, and may be changed according to the diversity of countries, times, and men's manners, so that nothing be ordained against God's word.

"Every particular or national church hath authority to ordain, change, and abolish ceremonies, or rites of the church, ordained only by man's authority, so that all things be done to edifying."

Second part of the Sermon of Good Works.

"Let us rehearse other kind of papistical superstitions and abuses, as of beads, lady psalters, rosaries, purgatory, masses, stations and jubilees, feigned relics and hallowed beads, bread, water, candles," &c. See before, Article 6 and 9.

The Council of Trent.

"[k] The holy synod doth receive and regard with the like affection of piety and reverence the Old and New Testament, and also those unwritten traditions dictated as it were by word of mouth by Christ, and preserved by continual succession in the church: [l] The matter and form of extreme unction; mass for the dead; the pronouncing the mass sometimes with a loud, at other times with a low voice; mystical benedictions, lights, incensings, garments, and many other such like things, are from apostolical discipline and tradition."

"[m] If any one shall say, that the rite of the Roman church of saying some part of the canon of the mass in a low voice is to be condemned, let him be accursed."

The Catechism of Trent.

"[n] The shaving of the head like a crown is from apostolical tradition.

"[o] None of the rites in the mass are useless and vain."

The Opposition.

The Church of England.	*The Church of Rome.*
1. It is not necessary that ceremonies ordained by man's au-	1. Unwritten traditions are equally to be regarded as scrip-

k Sess. 4. Decret. de Canon. Script.
l Sess. 14. cap. 1; Sess. 22. cap. 2 and 5.
m Can. 9.
n Par. 2. cap. 7. ss. 14.
o Cap. 4. ss. 81.

thority be in all places alike, and such may be changed.

2. Lights, and other ceremonies of the Romish church, are superstitious, and abuses.

ture, such are lights, incensings, shaving the head, &c. and so to be every where and always retained.

2. None of the ceremonies used in the mass, as lights and incensings, are useless and vain.

The 35th Article of the Church of England.

Of Homilies.

The Homilies contain a godly and wholesome doctrine, &c.

The Homilies charge the church of Rome with error, superstition, idolatry and usurpation.

The 36th Article of the Church of England.

Of Consecration of Bishops and Ministers.

"The book of Consecration of Archbishops and Bishops, and ordering of Priests and Deacons, lately set forth in the time of Edward the Sixth, and confirmed at the same time by authority of parliament, doth contain all things necessary to such consecration and ordering. And therefore, whosoever are consecrated or ordered, according to the rites of that book, or hereafter shall be consecrated or ordered according to the same rites; we decree all such to be rightly, orderly, and lawfully consecrated and ordered."

The Church of Rome.

The Council of Trent.

"[p] A sacrifice and priesthood are so conjoined by the ordinance of God, that both have existed in every law.

"[q] From the very beginning of the church there were the names of the following orders: the lesser; viz. Acolythi, Exorcists, Readers, and Doorkeepers: the greater and sacred; viz. the Sub-deacon, Deacon, and Priest."

Rhemists' Annotations.

"[r] Whosoever taketh upon him to preach without lawful sending, to minister sacraments, and is not canonically ordered of a true catholic bishop to be a curate of souls, &c., he is a

[p] Sess. 23. cap. 1. [q] Catechis. par. 2. cap. 7. ss. 11, 12. [r] On John x. 1.

thief and a murderer. So came in all heretics, and all that succeed them in room and doctrine.

"It is the common opinion of the members of the Romish church of our nation, that our bishops, &c. are none.

"In the church of England there are no bishops, no pastors, and so theirs is no true church.

"The ministers of the church of England are no priests because they want an essential part, which is to offer sacrifice," &c.

Of this mind were Harding, Stapleton, Sanders, Bristow, Champney, &c. formerly. See Mason's Vindiciæ Eccles. Angl.

The Opposition.

The Church of England.	*The Church of Rome.*
1. Besides bishops there are but two orders, viz. priests and deacons.	1. Besides bishops, and the four lesser orders, there were always three, viz. Priests, Deacons, and Subdeacons.
2. Archbishops, bishops, priests, and deacons are rightly, orderly, and lawfully consecrated and ordered in the church of England.	2. Such bishops and priests as are consecrated and ordered in the church of England are no bishops nor priests.

The 37th Article of the Church of England.

Of the Civil Magistrates.

"The queen's majesty hath the chief power in this realm of England, and other her dominions, unto whom the chief government of all estates of this realm, whether they be ecclesiastical or civil, in all causes doth appertain; and is not, nor ought to be, subject to any foreign jurisdiction.

"The bishop of Rome hath no jurisdiction in this realm of England."

The Third Part of the Sermon of Obedience.

"The usurped power of the bishop of Rome, which he most wrongfully challengeth, as the successor of St. Peter, is false, feigned and forged.

"The bishop of Rome teacheth, that they that are under him are free from all burdens and charges of the commonwealth, and obedience toward their prince, most clearly against

[s] Erastus Senior Pref. anno 1662. [t] A Paper in the Vindication of Ordination, &c. anno 1677.

Christ's doctrine and St. Peter's. He ought therefore rather to be called Antichrist, and the successor of the Scribes and Pharisees, than Christ's vicar or St. Peter's successor.

"St. Peter doth not say, 'Submit youselves unto me as the supreme head of the church,' neither saith he, 'Submit yourselves from time to time to my successor in Rome;' but, saith he, *Submit yourselves to the king, the supreme head.*"

The Second Part of the Sermon of Obedience.

"Wicked rulers have their power and authority from God, and therefore it is not lawful for their subjects to withstand them, although they abuse their power."

The necessary Doctrine and Erudition for any Christian Man; set forth by Hen. VIII. and compiled by Cranmer, &c.

"[x] Subjects be bound not to withdraw their fealty, truth, love, and obedience towards their prince for any cause, whatsoever it be; ne for any cause they may conspire against his person, ne do any thing towards the hinderance or hurt thereof, nor of his estate."

Third Part of the Sermon against wilful Rebellion.

"The speedy overthrow of all rebels of what number, state, or condition soever they were, or what colour or cause soever they pretended, is and ever hath been such, that God thereby doth shew that he alloweth neither the dignity of any person, nor the multitude of any people, nor the weight of any cause, as sufficient for the which the subjects may move rebellion against their princes."

See the oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy.

The Church of Rome.

§. 1. *Of the Authority claimed by the Church of Rome.*

1. "The Roman church is the mother and mistress of all churches." So the fourth general council of Lateran, can. 2; the council of Trent, sess. 7. can. 3, &c. This is made an article of faith in the Creed of pope Pius the IVth.

2. "The Roman bishop is the vicar of God and Christ, the successor of St. Peter, and hath the supreme pastorship over the universal church." So the council of Trent, sess. 6. de Reform. cap. 1. sess. 14. cap. 7, &c. This is also an article of faith in the aforesaid Creed.

[x] On the Fifth Commandment.

§. II. *Of the Exercise of this Authority.*

1. The church of Rome doth take upon her to command sovereign princes. So it is the phrase of their councils; "We do enjoin princes, we do peremptorily require kings," &c. So the fourth general council of Lateran, cap. 67, 68; the fifth general council of Lateran, de pragmat. Sanct.; the council of Trent.

2. She doth overrule what sovereign princes have commanded. So the council of Constance; [y] "Notwithstanding the safe conducts granted by emperors and kings, &c.; yet heretical wickedness may be inquired after by a competent judge, and the persons guilty be punished, although they should come to the place of judgment confiding in the safe conduct, and otherwise would not have come."

3. The church of Rome hath excommunicated such sovereign princes as have not submitted to what she hath commanded; and hath deposed such as have been thus excommunicated, and continued refractory; and absolved their subjects from allegiance to them when deposed. So—

The third General Council of Lateran.

"[z] We do forbid, under an anathema, that any one presume to keep or maintain heretics in their houses or land, or to exercise commerce with them. And if they shall die in this sin, there shall no oblation be made for them.

"And let subjects know, that they are released from all debt of fealty and homage, and all obedience."

The fourth General Council of Lateran.

"[a] Let secular powers, whatsoever offices they execute, be admonished, persuaded, and if it be necessary, compelled by ecclesiastical censure, that as they desire to be reputed and accounted faithful, so they would publicly take an oath for the defence of the faith, that they would endeavour in good faith, according to their power, to destroy [*exterminare*] all heretics marked by the church out of the lands of their jurisdiction. But if the temporal lord, being required and admonished, shall neglect to purge his land from this heretical filthiness, he shall be excommunicated by his metropolitan and the other bishops of the province. And if he shall refuse to give satisfaction

y Sess. 19. z Cap. 17. a Can. 3. de Hæreticis.

within a year, let it be signified to the pope, that he may forthwith denounce his vassals absolved from their allegiance, and expose his land to be possessed by catholics; who, having destroyed the heretics, may possess it without contradiction, and preserve it in the purity of the faith, saving the right of the principal lord, whilst that he doth make no hinderance to it. Nevertheless the same law is to be observed towards them who have no principal lords."

The General Council of Lyons, ann. 1245.

"[b] In this, pope Innocent the Fourth deprived the emperor Frederic the second after this manner: 'We, after diligent deliberation had with the sacred council, do declare and denounce that he is deprived of all honour and dignity, and by our sentence do deprive him, and do for ever absolve them from their oath who have sworn allegiance to him; firmly forbidding, by our apostolical authority, that any one from henceforward obey him as emperor or king, &c. And let those to whom the election belongs freely choose a successor in that empire.'"

The Council of Constance.

"[c] It is decreed, that all that should hinder the emperor Sigismund from meeting the king of Arragon, of what quality soever, though king, duke, &c., they be excommunicated and deprived of all their secular honour and dignity."

[d] And in the bull of pope Martyn the Fifth, read and approved in that council; "All professors of the Christian and catholic faith, the emperor, kings, dukes, &c., are required to expel all heretics out of their kingdoms and provinces, according to the canon, *Sicut ait*," &c.; that is, the abovesaid canon of the third Lateran council.

The Council of Trent.

"[e] The emperors, kings, dukes, &c., and all temporal lords of what title soever, who shall grant a place for duelling among Christians within their lands, shall for that cause be deprived of the dominion of the city, castle, or place in which they permitted the duel to be."

4. The church of Rome doth exempt the clergy from temporal jurisdiction. So—

[b] Sess. 3. [c] Sess. 17. [d] Sess. ult. [e] Decret. de reform. cap. 12.

The third General Council of Lateran.

"[f] Because some laics do compel ecclesiastical persons, and also bishops themselves, to appear before their judgment seat, we do therefore decree, that such be separated from the communion of the faithful, who shall presume from henceforward so to do."

The fourth General Council of Lateran.

"[g] Some laics do too much usurp upon Divine right, when they do compel ecclesiastical persons, holding nothing temporal from them, to take an oath of allegiance to them. But because, according to the apostle, *the servant doth stand or fall to his own master*, we do forbid by the authority of the sacred council, that such clerks be compelled to take this kind of oath to secular persons."

[h] See further the bull of pope Leo the Tenth, read in the fifth general council of Lateran; and the council of Trent, which doth ratify all canons made in their favour.

The Opposition.

The Church of England.	*The Church of Rome.*
1. The king hath chief power.	1. The pope hath power over kings, to excommunicate, depose, &c.
2. The king hath power over all persons.	2. Ecclesiastical persons are exempted from secular jurisdiction.
3. The bishop of Rome hath no power in the king's dominions: and the power he challengeth is usurpation.	3. The bishop of Rome is the universal pastor.
4. The king is not to be resisted.	4. The pope can give power to resist sovereign princes, and can absolve subjects from their allegiance.

As the opposition in this matter is evident betwixt church and church, so we look upon the one to be no less the doctrine of the church of Rome than the other is the doctrine of the church of England.

For, 1, it is notoriously manifest, that the church of Rome hath both owned such principles, and proceeded according to

[f] Cap. 14. [g] Can. 43. [h] Sess. 9. sess. 25. de reform. cap. 20.

those principles in excommunicating and deposing kings, in limiting their jurisdiction, and absolving subjects from their allegiance.

2. It is manifest, that the several branches of authority forerecited, and claimed by that church, are grounded upon the canons of what they call *general councils*. And that all in the communion of that church are bound to own and receive these principles, is evident, since they are decreed by the same councils and after the same manner as the doctrine of transubstantiation itself; and so are equally to be received with it by all the members of that church.

Thus far I have traced the disagreement between the church of England and Rome, according to the order observed in the Thirty-nine Articles; and I might proceed to shew the opposition between them in many other points; such as the sufficiency of attrition with absolution; the necessity of auricular confession; the adoration of the cross; the images made of God and the Trinity; the guardianship ascribed to angels and saints over places, professions, &c.; the pilgrimages to images and relics; the miracles pretended to be wrought by them; the religious states of life, and their vows of poverty and obedience; their particular ceremonies in the mass and baptism, their limbuses, &c.: but this will be too tedious, and indeed somewhat unnecessary, considering how evident it has been already made, not to say with some clearness demonstrated, that there is an irreconcilable difference between the two churches, "about those points" (to use our author's words) "wherein the very life of popery consists, and the whole system of that religion is founded." And as now I may leave it to his skill to try, whether he can with a *dictum factum* patch up a Cassandrian peace presently between them; so I shall leave it to the reader's judgment, even those he calls the unwary readers of books, whether we have left us nothing but the name and shadow of a protestant church of England[k], as he affirms; or whether the doctrine of the protestants be any where to be found, if not in the church of England. And for this purpose I shall present the reader with the sum of what has been said upon this argument.

[i] Agreement, preface. [k] Ibid.

A brief scheme of the difference betwixt the doctrine of the Church of England and the Church of Rome as set forth in the foregoing treatise.

Sufficiency of Scripture.

The Church of England teacheth.	*The Church of Rome holdeth.*
The holy scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be received as an article of faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation, p. 15.	The holy scripture doth not contain all saving truth; but there are certain traditions not written, which the church is to have recourse to for it, as well as the written books. And such traditions are to be received and regarded with the like piety and reverence as the books of the Old and New Testament.

Canonical Books.

No books are to be received as canonical, but Genesis, &c. that is, the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament and the New. And as for the thirteen books commonly called Apocrypha, though the church doth read them for example of life and instruction of manners, yet she doth not apply them to establish any doctrine.	The books commonly called Apocrypha, viz. Tobias, &c. are as canonical, and as truly the word of God, as the five books of Moses, &c. And whosoever doth not receive them is accursed.

Scripture in a known Tongue.

There is in scripture whatsoever is meet for all ages and sorts of men: and so the books of it ought to be much in their hands, eyes, and hearts. And none are enemies to the reading of it, but such as are ignorant or ungodly, that would wish the people still to continue in blindness and ignorance of God, p. 15.	If the scripture be permitted to be read every where in the vulgar tongue, more prejudice than benefit doth redound from it. And therefore it is fit that the people be deprived altogether of it, nor so much as suffered to have summaries, or historical abridgments of it.

Church Authority.

The Church of England teacheth.	*The Church of Rome holdeth.*
The church, though a witness and keeper of the holy 'writ, yet ought not to decree any thing against the same, nor to enforce any thing besides the same, to be believed for necessity of salvation, p. 37.	It belongs to the church of Rome to judge of the sense of the scripture; and it is in her power to forbid receiving the sacrament in both kinds, though Christ so instituted and delivered it.

The Fallibility of the Church.

As the church of Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Antioch have erred, so also the church of Rome hath erred, not only in their living and manner of ceremonies, but also in matters of faith: so that their claim of infallibility is but a vain brag, and nothing else, p. 31. 35,	The church of Rome cannot err, being taught by the holy Spirit suggesting all truth from day to day.

General Councils.

General councils may not be gathered together, without the commandment and will of princes: and when gathered may err, and sometimes have erred, in things pertaining to God, p. 39.	It belongs to the pope to call and direct general councils; and being so gathered, they have ever the assistance of God's Spirit, and so cannot err.

Christ the only Mediator.

Christ is the only mediator between God and man, being both God and man, in whom alone the conditions requisite in an object of worship are to be found; whence it followeth, that we must call neither upon angel nor saint, but solely upon him, as our Mediator: and to make them intercessors to God is after the Gentiles' idolatrous usage, p. 19, 41, 46.	There are other mediators of intercession in heaven besides Christ, such as angels and saints, and more especially the Virgin Mary, who is the Mother of mercy and Advocatress of the faithful; and it is good and profitable to invoke them, and to have recourse to their prayers, aid, and help. And those that deny they are to be invocated, or affirm the invocation of them is idolatry, are accursed.

Original Sin.

The Church of England teacheth.

Original sin is the corruption of the nature of every man naturally engendered of the offspring of Adam: and all offend in many things, Christ only excepted, p. 20, 30.

The Church of Rome holdeth.

The blessed Virgin is not comprehended in the decree of original sin, and never sinned so much as venially in all her life.

Images.

Image-worship was abhorred in the primitive church, as abominable and contrary to all true Christian religion: and to fall down before images, &c., is to give that honour to stocks and stones which the saints themselves refused when alive, p. 44.

The images of Christ, the Virgin Mary, and other saints, are to have due honour given to them, by kissing them, uncovering the head, falling down before them, lighting up candles to them, &c., by which Christ is adored, and the saints are venerated.

Relics.

To worship and honour the relics of saints, is to pass the folly and wickedness of the Gentiles. The Romish doctrine concerning worshipping and adoration of images and relics is a fond thing, grounded upon no warranty of scripture, but rather repugnant to it, p. 44.

The relics of the saints are to be venerated: and all that hold the contrary are accursed.

Purgatory.

There are two places only in the other world, the one proper to the elect and the blessed of God; the other to the reprobate. And the souls of men passing out of the body, go to heaven or hell. And the Romish doctrine concerning purgatory is a fond thing, vainly invented, and grounded upon no war-

There is a purgatory, or place of torment, in which the souls of good persons, not sufficiently purged, have their sins expiated, and they thereby are prepared for the kingdom of heaven. And the souls there detained are helped by the masses, prayers, alms, and other good works of the living. And if any one shall say there is not such a place, or that there remains no

The Church of England teacheth.	*The Church of Rome holdeth.*
ranty of scripture, but rather repugnant to it, p. 41.	guilt to be expiated by penitent persons in purgatory, or that those that are there are not helped by masses, &c., he is accursed.

Merits.

Though good works are pleasing unto God, yet to put any confidence in them, as by merit, and deserving of them to purchase to ourselves or others remission of sin and everlasting life, is mere blasphemy, and great derogation to the blood-shedding of our Saviour Jesus Christ, p. 24, 25.	Justified persons truly deserve eternal life, and the good works of such are truly and properly meritorious, and are fully worthy of eternal life: and whosoever thinketh otherwise is accursed.

Supererogation.

Works of supererogation, or such as are over and above God's commandment, cannot be taught without arrogancy and impiety; and it is an ungodly practice to make sale of them, and to persuade the people that thereby the sins of other men might have satisfaction made for them, p. 27, 28.	There are works of supererogation, which are done more than precept; and a person endued with Divine grace may satisfy for another, and pay in the name of another what is due to God; and the value of such works is to be so disposed of for that purpose, by such as Christ hath made dispensers of his treasures.

Indulgences.

The Romish doctrine concerning pardons is a fond thing, vainly invented, and grounded upon no warranty of scripture, but is rather repugnant to it, p. 41, 42.	The church hath a power from Christ to pardon offenders; and whatever debts, here or hereafter in purgatory, a man oweth to God for the satisfaction of his sins, may be remitted by the indulgence of the church; and whosoever saith that the church hath no such power, or that such indulgences are unprofitable, is accursed.

Prayers in a known Tongue.

The Church of England teacheth.

It is a thing plainly repugnant to the word of God, and the custom of the primitive church, to have public prayers in the church, or to minister the sacraments, in a tongue not understood of the people, p. 49.

The Church of Rome holdeth.

It is fittest every where to have the mass celebrated in Latin, or a tongue not understood by the people; and it is for that reason so enjoined. And whosoever saith it ought to be otherwise, is accursed.

Sacraments.

There are only two sacraments ordained of Christ, viz. Baptism and the Supper of the Lord; and the other five commonly called sacraments in the church of Rome are not sacraments, being such as have grown partly of the corrupt following of the apostles, (as Extreme Unction, &c.) partly are states of life allowed of in scripture, (as Matrimony,) but have not the like nature of sacraments with the other, p. 50.

The sacraments instituted by Christ are no fewer than seven, viz. Baptism, Confirmation, the Eucharist, Penance, Extreme Unction, Orders, and Matrimony. And whosoever shall say, that they are more or fewer than seven, or that any of these seven is not truly and properly a sacrament, is accursed.

Opus Operatum.

The sacraments have a wholesome effect or operation in such only as worthily receive them. p. 50.

The sacraments do confer grace *ex opere operato*, by the work done; and if any say otherwise, they are accursed.

Solitary Masses.

There is to be no celebration of the Lord's Supper, except there be a convenient number to communicate with the priest, *ibid.*

Those masses are to be approved and commended, where the priest communicates alone: and if any one shall say such are unlawful and to be abrogated, he is accursed.

Transubstantiation.

Transubstantiation, or the change of the substance of the bread and wine into the very

There is a transubstantiation, or a conversion of the whole substance of the bread into the

The Church of England teacheth.	*The Church of Rome holdeth.*
substance of the body and blood of Christ, is repugnant to the scripture, and overthroweth the nature of a sacrament, p. 52.	body, and of the whole substance of the wine into the blood of Christ; and whoso denies it is accursed.
The sacramental bread and wine remain in their very natural substances; and the natural body and blood of Christ are in heaven, and not here.	The species only of bread and wine remain in the eucharist; and the body and blood of Christ, together with his soul and divinity, and so whole Christ, are contained therein. And whoso denieth it is accursed.
The Body of Christ.	
The wicked, and such as be void of a lively faith, in no wise partake of Christ, p. 55.	Ill men receive the body and blood of Christ, be they infidels or ill-livers.
And the body of Christ is taken and eaten only after an heavenly and spiritual manner: and the mean whereby the body of Christ is received and eaten is faith, p. 52.	Christ is not only eaten spiritually; and whosoever shall so affirm, is accursed.
Sacrament in both Kinds.	
The cup is not to be denied to the lay-people: for both the parts of the sacrament ought by Christ's ordinance to be ministered to all, p. 55, 56.	Though Christ instituted the sacrament in both kinds, yet it is to be administered in one: and whosoever shall say, that it ought by God's command to be received in both; or that the church hath not for just reasons required it to be in one kind, &c., he is accursed.
Adoration of the Host.	
The sacrament of the Lord's Supper was not by Christ's ordinance reserved, carried about, lifted up and worshipped; and no adoration ought to be done thereunto, p. 52.	Christ is to be worshipped in the eucharist with Divine worship, and to be solemnly carried about, and to be shewed to the people, that he may be worshipped; and whosoever doth deny this, or saith that the worshippers are idolaters, is accursed.

The Sacrifice of the Mass.

The Church of England teacheth.

The sacrifice of the mass, in which it is commonly said the priest offers for the quick and dead, to have remission of pain and guilt, are blasphemous fables and dangerous deceits, p. 57.

The Church of Rome holdeth.

In the sacrifice performed in the mass, the selfsame Christ is contained and unbloodily offered, that offered himself on the cross; and this sacrifice is truly propitiatory, and is rightly offered for the sins, punishments, and satisfactions of the living and dead. And if any one shall deny this, or say it is blasphemy, he is accursed.

Traditions and Ceremonies.

The burden of ceremonies in the Romish church is intolerable for their excess and multitude; and by reason of their obscurity they more confound than set forth Christ's benefits to us, and deface the plain, simple, and sincere religion of Christ; and as they are vain in themselves, so are abused to gross superstition, p. 33, 61.

The ceremonies used in the mass, &c. are of apostolical tradition and institution, and which serve for the majesty of so great a sacrifice, and are for the exciting of the faithful. And though they are many, yet none of them is to be esteemed needless and vain; and if any one shall say that they are rather incitements to impiety than helps to piety, he is accursed.

Of the Consecration of Bishops, &c.

There are no other orders in the church than bishops, priests, and deacons.

And these are rightly consecrated and ordered in the church of England, p. 63.

There are seven orders in the church, bishops, priests, deacons, acolythi, exorcists, readers, the doorkeepers, subdeacon, deacon, and priest.

Those consecrated and ordained out of the church of Rome are no bishops or pastors, but thieves and murderers, p. 64.

Priests' Marriage.

Bishops, priests, and deacons may lawfully marry, and are not commanded by God's

It is not lawful for bishops, priests, and deacons to marry; and if married, they are to be

The Church of England teacheth.

law, either to vow the estate of single life, or to abstain from marriage: and therefore the monastical vow of single life, accounted the highest state of perfection, is the leaven of man's feigned religion, and abominable to God, p. 59.

The Church of Rome holdeth.

separated, and to be brought to penance; and if any one shall say, that such as have professed chastity may contract matrimony, or that such matrimony is valid, because they have not the gift of chastity, he is accursed.

The Supremacy.

The king in all his realms hath supreme power in all causes, whether ecclesiastical or civil: and the bishop of Rome hath therein no jurisdiction, and can release none from subjection to their prince. For God alloweth neither the dignity of any person, nor the multitude of any people, nor the weight of any cause, as sufficient for the which subjects may rebel, p. 65.

The power the bishop of Rome challengeth as successor of St. Peter, is false and feigned.

The pope is the vicar of Christ, successor of St. Peter, and the supreme pastor over all the world. He may command sovereign princes, overrule what they command, excommunicate and depose them, if they contradict his commands; and absolve their subjects from allegiance, and exempt the clergy from their jurisdiction, p. 67, 70.

Lastly, the church of Rome doth hold all things delivered, defined, and declared by the sacred canons and general councils, and especially that of Trent, &c. And that this is the true catholic faith, out of which none can be saved, [Creed of Pius IVth.]

THE DIFFERENCE

OF

THE CASE

BETWEEN THE SEPARATION OF PROTESTANTS

FROM

THE CHURCH OF ROME

AND THE SEPARATION OF DISSENTERS

FROM

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

SINCE the happy reformation of this church, they of the Romish persuasion have with their utmost art insinuated that our reformation proceeded upon principles destructive of all order and government in the church, and that it naturally tends to endless separations. To this end they have laid hold upon that advantage which the divisions amongst protestants have offered them, and said, that the reasons upon which we ground our separation from the church of Rome will hold to justify the separation of the dissenters from the church of England. And the truth is, some of the dissenters have been so indiscreet, to say no more, as to allege the same thing. And I am very sorry that men of the same persuasion with us, in opposition to the impious errors and practices of the Roman church, should give so much countenance to that grievous charge upon the reformation as some of them have done. The papists are too much beholden to them for giving the occasion of this accusation; but to join with them in the same charge is too great a kindness in all reason, and indeed destructive of the common cause of the reformation, by insinuating one of these two things; either that there was no reason for this separation on either part; or else, that notwithstanding our pretended reformation, we are still as bad as the church of Rome:

for otherwise they cannot have the same reason to separate from us, that we had at first to separate from that church.

I shall endeavour with God's help to shew, in a short and plain discourse upon this subject, that the cases are vastly different; and that we have very good reasons wherewith to justify our separation from the church of Rome; and that the dissenters who forsake our communion cannot, by any good consequence from those reasons, warrant their separation from our church.

In this attempt, I am sensible that I have adversaries on both sides; and that it often happens to be a nice and hazardous business to determine between two extremes. But I hope there is no reason to apprehend great danger in this case; since it is the same false charge against the reformation in which these extreme parties agree; and it is of that nature, that it is all one whether I confute it against the papists or against the protestant separatists; for if it be disproved against one, it is shewn to be unjust in both.

This is our case, that as we charge those of the separation from our church with schism, so do the Romanists charge us of the church of England with schism too; but with this difference, as we pretend, that we have good reason for that, so have not they for this. For schism is a causeless separation from a church. And we think we may appeal to all disinterested and judicious Christians, that we have shewn our separation from Rome to be grounded upon just and necessary causes; but that the dissenters have shewn none such for their separation from us. And when all is done, it should not incline any man to think that the truth is either with the Romanist or with the dissenter, because the charge of schism is laid by the Romanist against us, and by us against the separatist, with equal confidence, unless he sees withal that it is laid with equal justice.

For it was not indeed to be expected, but that when some protestants, demanding a farther reformation, separated from our church, this pretence would soon after be set on foot both by those of the church of Rome and by those of the separation. It lay fair for them both, and, right or wrong, was likely to be taken up by both; since it would serve exceedingly well to help a bad cause, and to give popular colours to the weak ar-

guments, both of the one and of the other side. The Romanist was not likely to forego such an advantage as the separation of our dissenters gave him, to disgrace the reformation amongst those that loved unity. Nor was the separatist likely to omit that advantage which our reformation gave him, to commend his separation from us, under the notion of a further separation from Rome, to those that abhorred popery. And therefore it will stand all discreet persons in hand to weigh the merits of the cause on both sides, and not to admit any prejudice against our communion in favour either of the papist or the sectary, merely because they both say, that in justifying our separation from the papist, we vindicate the separation of the sectary from ourselves.

I must not in this narrow compass pretend to enter upon a discussion of the several questions controverted between us and our adversaries on both sides; but shall take it for granted, that what has been said in answer to the several objections of the dissenters against our communion, has been well argued against them: and likewise that in charging the church of Rome with several corruptions in doctrine and practice, which have made her communion intolerable, we have said upon each point no more than what has been well proved against that church; and which upon all fit occasions, we shall, by the grace of God, be ready to make good again. But my principal design is to shew, that there is no manner of inconsistence in the way we take to vindicate ourselves from schism, charged upon us by the church of Rome, with those principles upon which we accuse our dissenting brethren of that fault, who separate from the church of England: and that the Romanist cannot take our arguments against the separation of the dissenters, to condemn our reformation; nor the separatist our reasons against the communion of the Romanist, to acquit himself in forsaking the communion of our church.

This I conceive will be made to appear,

1. By laying down the reasons on both sides; those by which we pretend to justify our separation from the church of Rome; and those upon which the dissenters lay the stress of their separation from us.

2. By comparing them together, that we may judge wherein

and how far these cases agree with or differ from one another.

In laying down the reasons on both sides, I shall begin with the grounds upon which this church separated from the church of Rome; and then proceed to those upon which the dissenters separate from us.

1. To the church of Rome charging us with schism, we answer in general: that our separation from her was necessary, by reason of those corruptions in her communion, which we could not comply with against the conviction of our consciences. More particularly we say, that this church of England had no dependence upon the authority of the church of Rome which she might not lawfully throw off, and that she does not owe any subjection to the bishop of Rome, but had just power, without asking his leave, or staying for his consent, to reform herself. And withal, that the church of Rome ought to have reformed herself, as we have done, since there were most necessary causes for so doing; the communion of that church being defiled with the profession of those damnable errors, and the practice of those superstitions and idolatries which we have done away. To this purpose we challenge those of that communion with the particulars of their doctrine of transubstantiation—their sacrifice of the mass—their service in an unknown tongue—their half communion—their worship of images—their adoration of the host—and the rest of those abominations, whereof the communion of that church doth in great part consist. We acknowledge that we separated from them in these things when we reformed ourselves; but in so doing we were not guilty of schism from the church of Rome, and that, if nothing else were to be said, because this church owes no subjection to that; but withal, that the causes of the reformation being so necessary as we pretend them to be, the separation of communion that ensued upon our being, and their hating to be reformed, was on our side just and necessary upon that account also, and therefore not schismatical.

So that our answer is twofold.

1. That the church of England, being by no kind of right subject to the Roman or any foreign bishop, had full power and authority, without asking leave of foreigners, to reform

herself. And this we say would have cleared her from the imputation of schism, if the causes of the reformation had not been so necessary as indeed they were. If before the reformation there had been no unlawful conditions of communion required in the western churches, and all the fault that could have been found in them had amounted to no more than bare inconveniences and imprudence in the manner of their discipline, or in ordering the outward mode of worship; it had yet been free for the church of England to have reformed those lesser faults within herself, though no other church would have done the like. And though for such defects remaining in other churches abroad, she ought not to have separated from their communion; yet she might very justly and commendably free herself from them at home. But if a foreign church—suppose that of Rome—should hereupon have abstained from the communion of this church, till we had returned to the former inconvenient though lawful rites and customs, that foreign church had been guilty of schism in so doing. And if the church of England, not willing to part with her liberty, and to prostitute her authority to the usurpation of the see of Rome, should have adhered to her own reformation, she had not been guilty of the breach of communion, following that her resolution; because she had done nothing but what was within the compass of her just power to do, and in which she was not liable to be controlled by any other church.

We say, with St. Cyprian[a], that "the episcopal government of the church ought to be but one, spread abroad amongst bishops, many in number, but heartily agreeing together." But with the same excellent man we say too, [b]that "it is equal that every one of them should have a part of the flock assigned to him, which he is to govern, remembering that he is to give an account of his management to God," which he said, in asserting the freedom of the African churches from subjection to the Roman. This we think is justly applicable to our case.

The church of England is a national church, once indeed under the usurpation of the Roman bishop, and at length rescued from that servitude; we are at present united together by common rules for government and worship, consulted upon and agreed unto by the bishops and presbyters in convo-

[a] Ad Antonianum, Ep. 52. [b] Ad Cornelium, Ep. 55.

cation, and then made laws to all the particular churches of this kingdom, by the authority of the sovereign. These laws shew the reformation of the church; and they do not want any authority they ought to have, for wanting the consent of the Roman bishop, upon whom we have neither ecclesiastical nor civil dependence. For if any one single bishop of the African church might determine causes, and judge matters of ecclesiastical cognizance, (which yet was seldom done in things of moment without the advice of colleagues when the church had rest from persecution,) and this without allowing appeals to Rome; much more may the bishops of a whole Christian kingdom confederate together to order church matters independently upon the see of Rome, especially being required thereunto by their Christian sovereign, to whom they all owe subjection and obedience in all things, saving their common Christianity. So that if the causes of the reformation had not been so weighty as indeed they were, yet considering the authority by which it was effected, our separation from Rome thereupon ensuing was wholly guiltless on our part, it being necessary, unless we would submit to the unjust and tyrannous claims of a foreign bishop.

2. To the charge of schism laid against us by the Romanist we answer also, that "the conditions of communion required in the Roman church were many of them unlawful to be submitted unto;" since we could not communicate with her without professing doctrines that are plainly contrary to God's word, nor without doing several things that are clearly and particularly forbidden by it. And since it is not in the power of any man or church to dispense with our obligations to the laws of God, we could not be obliged to preserve communion with the bishop of Rome and his adherents upon these terms. But because catholic communion ought to be preserved, they ought to have put away those scandals from amongst themselves; which since they have not done, though the separation is equal on both sides, yet the schism is not ours but theirs only.

And therefore we further say, that if the corruptions of the Roman church (which God forbid) should ever come to be established in this church of England again by the same authority that has abolished them; it were not only lawful, but

a necessary duty to separate from the communion of this church in that case. We have that reverence of church authority, and of the supreme magistrate, that we will submit to their determinations in all things wherein God has left us to our own liberty. But if they command us to do things contrary to his determination, and to take that liberty which he has not given us, we must remember that we are to *obey God rather than man*. We have that sense also of the mischief of divisions and separations, and of the duty of maintaining church-communion, that if the laws of God be but observed, we are not only ready to comply with what our own superiors impose upon us, for the sake of peace and unity at home; but if we were to go abroad, we should observe the customs of other churches, though perhaps very different from ours, and this for the sake of maintaining one communion of Christians every where. But neither abroad nor at home can we purchase unity of communion at so dear a rate, as to break God's commandments for it.

We know it is a good thing for all the parts of the church to have but one communion, but we *must not do evil that* even this *good may come:* and least of all that evil which church-communion and church-authority were in great part designed to prevent. For as we believe that Christ formed his disciples into a spiritual society, so we have great reason to conclude that one main end hereof was, that by the communion of Christians under their governors, the holy truths and laws of God, concerning his worship and our salvation, might be more advantageously held forth to the world, and more effectually guarded and maintained. And therefore to keep this communion one as much as in us lies, we will do any thing required by our superiors, that God has left us free to do or not: but to deny that holy truth or any part of it, or to break any of those Divine laws, for the sake of which this communion itself was instituted, neither of these things dare we do to prevent divisions and separations. And we are as sure that transubstantiation—adoration of the host—worshipping of images—praying to the dead—and praying in an unknown tongue, are repugnant to several express texts of scripture, not to say to common sense and reason: we are, I say, as sure that they are the plain laws and truths of God to which these

things are contrary; and withal, that to guard these truths God instituted *a church*, and *a communion of saints*, as we are that there was any such thing as a church instituted, or church-communion required. And truly if separation, when there is such cause for it as we pretend, were not a necessary duty, it might become the duty of Christians to be united in scandalous impieties and damnable errors. And I think nobody will say, that in such things one communion is either to be desired or excused, but rather to be broken, and that every man is concerned, as much as his salvation is worth, to break away from it. And we are certain it can never be necessary to any man's salvation to be a schismatic.

Upon this account, we say, that they who in queen Mary's days chose to lay down their lives, rather than return to the communion of the Roman church, were so far from being schismatics, that they were God's martyrs in so doing. And had it been or should it be our lot to have this choice, so hard to flesh and blood, offered to us, we trust, that through the mighty grace of God, we should follow the faith and patience of those holy men and women who sealed this cause with their blood, meekly suffering under the displeasure of that just authority, the unjust commands whereof they could not honestly obey. This plain, though general account, we give of the separation of the church of England from the church of Rome. And if we pretend no more in our own defence against that church than we can prove, we have reason to think ourselves safe on that side.

2. Let us now see upon what principles and by what pleas the dissenters defend their separation from the church of England. To us therefore charging them with schism upon this account, they answer also, that our communion is corrupt, and that they cannot with a safe conscience continue in it; and that they are bound for greater purity of worship and ordinances to divide from us. But in making out this general answer they do not all go the same way, nor do some of them allow those to be good reasons for a separation which others think substantial enough. That in which most of them do agree, is in assigning some ceremonies enjoined in our church, concerning which some of them say that they are unlawful to be used in God's worship; others of them, that there is great

cause to doubt whether they be lawful or not: and these dare not join in our communion with scrupulous and unsatisfied minds. The things of this sort are—the sign of the cross in the Office of Baptism (though this be made by the minister only,)—kneeling in the act of receiving the eucharist—and the ministers' wearing the surplice in public worship. The other faults they find with the Liturgy, however they are thought by the generality of dissenters to be a reason sufficient to ground separation upon, are not, I think, produced by those that should best understand the cause, as amounting to make our communion directly unlawful. But yet there are that say, they "ought not to prefer a worse mode of serving God before a better:" and the mode which themselves observe being better, they are to prefer that before ours, and therefore to separate from us for the most part. Others go yet further from us, and take liturgies and prescribed forms of prayer to be unlawful to be used, or at least suspect them so to be. And all these do generally dislike the form of diocesan episcopacy: however, they seem not to lay the stress of their separation upon that, since they acknowledge our churches to be true churches of Christ, and if it were not for other things, might be lawfully communicated with, although they are governed by bishops. And because the civil authority concurs with the ecclesiastical in requiring conformity to our church laws, they do not pretend those laws to be enforced by an authority to which they are not bound to submit. And therefore, as far as I can find, they rather chose to justify their separation upon the account of the unlawfulness or suspected unlawfulness of the things imposed, or upon the preference of a better communion than ours is. But out of these I must except the Independents, who acknowledge no other church to be agreeable to the word of God, but such a company of Christian people united one to another by a particular covenant under officers of their own choosing, as can at once assemble in the same place for the worship of God. And these men think the very constitution of our church to be reason enough for a separation from it. I will take notice of no other dissenters at present, but those that separate upon some one or more of these grounds, which may be reduced to three:

1. That a national church authority is an usurpation upon

particular congregations, which are pretended to be the only churches of Christ's institution, and that every such church has full power in itself to order all things relating to worship and discipline, and is not of right accountable to any other authority for the order it shall take to govern itself in these things; and therefore the Independents, as I said, think themselves clear of the guilt of schism, as having separated from a church which is not of Christ's institution. For they take an independent congregation only to be such. But yet these are willing to come in with the other dissenters for their interest in the next ground of separation, upon which all of them, as far as I can judge, hope to find the surest footing; and that is,

2. That the conditions of our communion, those namely before-mentioned, are not lawful for a Christian to submit unto. And here I include those that do but scruple the lawfulness of those things which are enjoined in our church. For they that say positively they are unlawful, and they that but suspect them to be unlawful, produce the same arguments; the former to justify their peremptoriness, the latter their scruples. The reasons, I say, upon which they go, are the same, only they work up some of them to a greater height of confidence than others are come to; and some again they leave altogether doubtful what to say, whether to conclude for us or against us. They agree in blaming our church for requiring things to be done in God's worship which he has not commanded, some also of which have been and still are done by papists in their idolatrous services, from whom we ought to depart in all things that are not necessary to be done. Upon these grounds some pretend to be sure, others to be afraid, that to suffer their children to be signed with the sign of the cross, to kneel at the communion, to be present at Divine service where a surplice is worn, and to submit to liturgies and prescribed forms of worship, are unlawful. And these reasons I find owned in the "Case of indifferent Things used in God's Worship, stated on the Behalf of Dissenters," just now published.

For thus that author declares in their behalf: "We cannot," saith he[c], "conceive it possible, that in things of Divine worship, things of an indifferent nature should be the just matter of

[c] Case on Behalf of Dissenters.

any human determination, further than the particular practice of the person determining." And again[d], "where in matters of worship God hath wrote *ors*, whether by his pen in sacred writing, or[e] by his not prescribing the particular circumstances, no man can blot them out; though themselves may as to their own practice, for this or that time or act, where they cannot use more than one of those postures or circumstances." That is, where God hath left men at their liberty to do this or that, they may determine themselves, but no human authority may determine for them. Further, "as to things in God's worship not determined by God, they judge every man is *sui juris*, and ought to be determined by God alone to this or that;" i. e. he can be obliged to this or that part by God only. And he says plainly, "that most of them are confident, that in matters of worship no superiors may restrain what God hath left at liberty." In pursuance of this general principle he says, "some posture in an human action being necessary, and none by God determined in every act[f] of worship, where there is no determination, they believe themselves at liberty, and think they ought not to be determined by any thing but their own practical judgment, according to present circumstances; it is a *liberty with which God hath made them free*." Again, he acknowledges that they "judge it unlawful to obey laws concerning[g] words in prayer which God hath left at liberty; and concerning habits and gestures, supposing them to be left at liberty, and that none who is to use them, verily judgeth them unlawful." And he intimates more than once, that "[h] things not necessary, and ordinarily used in idolatrous and superstitious services, may not," in their judgment, "be lawfully used." How well he has proved these positions, I am not concerned to examine, but leave him for that to his learned antagonist. These observations are particular enough for my purpose, which is to shew the difference between the ground of our separation from the Roman church, and those of their separation from us, whom this gentleman defends.

3. There are those who, for all this, seem not to think our communion unlawful in itself, since they can sometimes com-

[d] Case on Behalf of Dissenters, p. 5. [e] P. 17. [f] P. 16, 17. [g] P. 9. [h] P. 20, &c.

municate with us in our whole service. But they judge the way of the separate meetings to be more perfect, and a better means of edification; and the ground of their separation is this, that it is unlawful to communicate ordinarily in a more imperfect way of worship, and enjoying the ordinances of the gospel, where a better may be had.

2. I come now to the second point, which is to compare the grounds of separation on both sides together, that we may judge wherein they differ, or how far they agree.

1. I do acknowledge that the most general ground of all, is the same on both sides, or at least may be so; that is, that we separate from the church of Rome, in a full persuasion of conscience that so we ought to do; and that the dissenters separate from the church of England with the like persuasion. But how far this agreement makes the case of separation the same on both sides; and whether it will equally justify the church of England's separating from Rome, and the dissenters' separating from the church of England, will be considered time enough after all the other reasons are compared.

2. The next general reason on both sides alleged is, that separation was necessary for greater purity of worship and ordinances. We for greater purity separated from Rome: the dissenters for greater purity separated from us. Now whether this may or may not reasonably be pretended by the dissenters in their case, as well as by the church of England in hers, will best appear when we have laid together the particulars excepted against on both sides—by us with reference to the communion of the church of Rome—by the dissenters with reference to the communion of the church of England: and have also considered the way of maintaining objections against the terms of communion with Rome and England, that is peculiar to each side. But,

3. There is not the same plea offered to justify the separation in both cases, with respect to that authority by which the conditions of communion are prescribed. For we of the church of England do unanimously deny that the bishop of Rome hath any just authority to make rules for the communion, or to prescribe laws for the government of our church. But all the dissenters do not question the lawfulness of that authority by which our Liturgy is established, and those things

which they object against, are required. For those of the presbyterian persuasion amongst us, however they dislike diocesan episcopacy, yet seem not to insist upon it in their late writings as a ground of separation from this church; but if other things were reformed according to their mind, they would submit to our bishops, and by their conformity contribute to uphold the order of this national church. But then the Independents indeed must, in consequence of their principles, deny that bishops singly or jointly, whether with the civil authority or without it, have any right to prescribe to their congregations in matters ecclesiastical, since in these things they hold their members to be accountable to no authority under God, but that of the congregation to which they belong.

And now I shall compare the two cases of separation with respect to three things, which will, I conceive, comprehend all the forementioned pleas on both sides; that is, with respect, 1. to authority; 2. to terms of communion, and under this head to the common pretence of separating for greater purity; 3. to the plea of conscience.

1. With respect to authority. We are divided from the church of Rome as one particular constituted church from another, neither of which has any authority to prescribe to the other in matters ecclesiastical. And therefore, as I said before, though the terms of the communion of that church were not unlawful, yet if she would have no communion with us, unless we would be governed by her laws; and if our church governors should use their own liberty and authority to prescribe to us what they judged more suitable to the general rules of scripture, and more conducible to the great ends of Christianity; the separation ensuing upon that church's affecting an usurpation over us could not be schismatical on our part, who are not the subjects of the bishop of Rome; but upon the part of that church it would be so, for her exercising an authority where she has no right so to do.

But the case of the dissenters is far otherwise, who separate from this national church in which they were born and baptized, and where they live. For by thus doing, we say, that they withdraw their obedience from their lawful governors; from whom if they divide, especially if they set up a commu-

nion distinct from that of their superiors, and of the congregations under them, they are guilty of manifest schism, unless the terms of communion be unlawful. For it is by no means sufficient to clear them of this fault, that those things which fall within the compass of church-authority are not well ordered; because, although this were true, yet in these things their practice is to be determined by that authority. For we think it very evident, that no society can be united and maintained without this principle, that a lawful authority is to be submitted unto and obeyed by inferiors in all lawful things, and that the mere imprudence or inexpedience of its determinations cannot absolve them from their obligation to comply therewith.

Now that it is a lawful authority upon which the constitution of a national church stands, I think no man can deny, that will grant a national church itself to be but a lawful constitution. For there is the concurrence both of civil and ecclesiastical superiors to give them force. The bishops and presbyters first agreed upon the same rule and order for church-government and worship, which being afterward approved by the lords and commons in parliament, was then made a law by the king. So that if the confederation of the particular churches of this kingdom to govern themselves and to serve God in religious assemblies, by the same rule, and according to the same form, can become the matter of a law obliging all Christians amongst us to conformity; here is no authority wanting to induce such an obligation.

And it is to be considered, that every one who separates from that parochial congregation where he lives, and betakes himself to an opposite communion, had been guilty of schism in so doing, although the churches of this kingdom had not been united as they are into a national form; but each bishop with his presbyters had made rules for religious assemblies independently upon the rest. But now the fault of such separation is heinously aggravated, as the case stands, by these two considerations:

1. That those orders or impositions, upon the account whereof he separates from the parish where he lives, were made by the common advice of the pastors of Christ's flock in this kingdom; and that for a common rule to them all: which

method was a most proper means to unite their particular churches more closely one to another, and to edify and strengthen them by such union. Therefore that separation which would have been blamable of itself, is so much the worse as it tends to break so profitable an union, and to expose the authority of so many church governors to contempt, as contributed towards it by their advice and consent.

2. That since the rules thus agreed upon are made laws also by the sovereign power; such schism is aggravated further by disobedience to the lawful commands of the civil authority under which we live, and to which all particular churches in this kingdom do owe obedience in all lawful things. And now I believe our presbyterian brethren will grant, that upon these accounts there is a vast difference between the cases of separation from the church of England and from the church of Rome in point of authority.

But then I must confess, the Independents are likely enough to say, that these impositions are as truly usurpations upon particular congregations, as if they had been enforced upon this kingdom by a pretended authority from Rome. And if there were no difference between saying and proving, we might here be at a considerable loss. However, this must be granted, that an English bishop may have good authority to govern his diocese, and a presbyter his parish here in England; and yet it may be foolish and unjust in a foreign bishop to claim any authority over the one or the other. And I hope they will not deny that the king has good authority here, though the pope has none; nor that the laws of the land concerning religion and God's worship do bind the consciences of the king's subjects something more than if they had wanted the authority of the legislative power at home, and came to us from abroad with nothing but the seal of the fisherman to recommend them; i. e. that in this latter case we might have refused them as wanting authority, but not so in the former; but that the matter of them being supposed to be lawful, they ought to be complied with. And whereas the Independents suppose the independency of their congregations to be of Divine right, both in opposition to episcopal superiority and to national church-government, this we must leave to the merits of the cause between them and us. And I may as well take it for granted,

that their pretended right to independency has been as clearly argued of novelty and weakness, as the pope's pretended right to supremacy has been; argued, I say, of more novelty, and almost as much weakness.

But to step a little out of the way of my present business; I may appeal to all understanding persons, who cannot judge of the learning used on both sides; whether that notion of a church or of church-communion is likely to be true, which makes it impossible for the particular churches of a Christian kingdom to be united under the sovereign authority in the observation of the same rules advised upon, and the same laws made for the benefit of them all. In the mean time I conclude this head with saying, that though the pope has no authority in this kingdom, yet it follows not that every particular congregation must be independent. And I challenge any man to take any one argument used by any of our church, to prove the independency of our church upon the bishop of Rome, and make it hold to prove the independency of a congregation, either upon a national or episcopal church, if he can. Wherefore supposing the decrees of the bishop of Rome to be of no good authority amongst us; and our own laws, in matters ecclesiastical, to want no good authority, the conditions of communion being otherwise lawful on both sides; then the separation ensuing upon our refusal to submit to those decrees would not be schismatical on our part; but the separation of our Independents, and all others amongst us refusing to submit to these laws, would be so on their part. And thus much for the difference in point of authority.

2. We are to compare the cases also with respect to the terms of communion relating to matters of faith and worship.

And in the first place, the dissenters acknowledge that the faith professed in this church is pure and entire, and that she does not require the profession of any doctrine in order to her communion which a good Christian has reason to suspect. And this makes a great difference between the terms of communion with our church, and the terms thereof with the church of Rome, which requires the profession of gross and palpable errors of all whom she admits to her communion.

But the great offence is taken at our forms of Divine service,

and the ceremonies thereunto belonging. And the offended parties are of three sorts:

1. Those that do not directly charge any of our practices in worship as sinful, but suppose some of them to be inexpedient and unedifying: and they that separate upon this account must acknowledge this difference in the case, that whereas we separating from Rome forsook an unlawful communion for one that was lawful; they separating from us, forsake a lawful communion for one that they believe to be better. And of these I shall take notice again in a fitter place.

2. Another sort are they who pretend something more, that is, that they scruple the lawfulness of the things enjoined, and that they ought not to communicate with us, so long as they remain under these doubts. And these men also must confess a great difference between the reason upon which they separate from us, and that for which we separate from the church of Rome; since we are past doubting in the case, and positively affirm those conditions of communion with the church of Rome, which we complain of, to be in themselves unlawful. And in consequence hereof, they must not deny that there is a great difference also between those grounds upon which they and we pretend against that church the unlawfulness of her impositions, and those upon which they suspect the like of ours; and that is, that the Roman church is by us attacked with clear and unquestionable evidence of reason and scripture against her: but that it remains doubtful whether there be any good evidence in scripture against us: concerning which, more will be said under the next head. In the mean time it does by no means follow, that because separation is just and necessary, where some things are required to be done which we certainly know God has forbidden; therefore it is just and necessary also where other things are required, concerning which we do not know but they may be lawful.

3. The third sort are they that pretend these forms of worship and ceremonies, which the former either scruple or judge only inexpedient, to be indeed sinful, and to render our communion not only suspected, and less desirable, but plainly unlawful. And I grant, that these are the men that come up to the point; and if they could but make good what they say, they

would shew their separation from our church to be grounded upon one general reason of our separation from the church of Rome, which would sufficiently clear us from the imputation of schism, if no other reason were to be given. But I believe a very wide difference of the case will appear, when we come to consider,

1. The particular practices themselves, which are by us said to be unlawful in the communion of the Roman church; and those which by the dissenters are said to be unlawful in ours. And,

2. The way and means by which we pretend to prove those, and that by which they pretend to prove these unlawful.

1. Let us consider the particulars themselves. The dissenters do with us condemn, as unlawful—prayers in an unknown tongue—the adoration of the host—worshipping the cross—and the like practices of the Roman church in her forms of worship: from which they acknowledge also, that we have purged our communion. But they say we have retained other practices something akin to these, though not quite so bad: for instance, kneeling at the communion—wearing the surplice—signing with the sign of the cross; and some of them add, the public use of forms of prayer. Now all that I design under this head, in comparing the former and the latter particulars together, is to shew, that the unlawfulness of the former being supposed, the unlawfulness of the latter cannot be from thence inferred; and that for this plain reason, because the questions concerning the one and the other are perfectly distinct from one another. For as the bishop of Rome's having no authority here in England shall not hinder the authority which our bishops exercise in England from being lawful and good; so, to pray in an unknown tongue may be absurd and contrary to scripture: but for all this, forms of prayer in a language understood by the whole congregation may not only be lawful but profitable, and in most cases necessary. The adoration of the host may be an idolatrous practice; yet to kneel in the act of receiving the eucharist, where such adoration is disclaimed, shall be no such practice. We may sign the baptized infant with the sign of the cross, and yet not worship that sign; we may do the former in token of the obligation which baptism layeth upon us, without attributing

any of that virtue or efficacy thereunto, which makes the popish use of it foolish and superstitious. What practice is there in the Roman church which we as unlawful have abandoned, from whence the unlawfulness of wearing a surplice, or seeing it worn, can with any colour of reason be drawn? In a word, what erroneous doctrine in the church of Rome, or unlawful practice confessed by the dissenters to be by us rejected, can be assigned, from which the unlawfulness of any of those things excepted against in our liturgy can be inferred? Let them take any one argument used by us to prove such or such a particular condition of communion unlawful which that church requires, and by that argument prove some condition unlawful in ours, if they can. But perhaps they will say, that if they can prove this by other arguments, the case in general will still be the same. This I confess, and therefore I proceed to the second point, which was,

2. To shew the difference between the way and means by us used to prove those conditions of the Roman communion unlawful, which we except against; and the manner of arguing used by the dissenters against us. Now our way is plain and direct; for we prove those particulars in the Roman worship unlawful which we condemn, by this argument, that they are forbidden in God's word, and this we prove by those express and particular places of holy scripture to which they are repugnant. And if we fail not of producing such testimonies against the corruptions of that church, we have the advantage against the papists. And if the dissenters charge any condition of our communion with repugnancy to God's law, and can as clearly shew where he hath forbidden it, they have the like advantage against us.

Now indeed they say that the things imposed upon them, however we esteem them indifferent, are by themselves judged unlawful. Thus the forementioned author saith, "Could they [dissenters] but look upon the forms and rites of our worship under that notion [of things indifferent], possibly their contest would neither be great nor long[1]." I do not like these words, for that which may be, may not be; and possibly the contest would be great and long, though they should look upon these things as indifferent. However, he says, that "we

[1] Case on Behalf of Diss. p. 2.

suppose those things indifferent which they cannot but judge unlawful, as they have often told their brethren[k]." But how do they prove them unlawful? Do they shew where God hath forbidden them? As we, for instance, produce the second commandment to shew that in that commandment God hath forbidden the worship of images, so do they; or can they produce any such testimony of scripture against kneeling when we receive the eucharist? And as we allege, 1 Cor. xiv. against praying in an unknown tongue; can they shew us any text in all the Bible against praying by a form of words? No, this is not what they pretend to do. But then we are apt to conclude, that if these things be not forbidden, that they are at least indifferent, and therefore lawful. And, which is something more, we have their leave also thus to conclude, seeing "there is none of them but agreeth with us in our notion of indifferent things, viz. that they are such things as by the Divine law are neither enjoined nor forbidden: things undetermined by the law of God in nature or scripture[l]." How then do they prove those things unlawful to be done in God's worship, which God hath not forbidden either in the law of nature or scripture? To make short work of it: those particulars in our communion which they except against, are unlawful, because they are not necessary to worship, nor commanded by any express law of God. Which is as much as to say, that though they are indifferent, because they are neither enjoined nor forbidden by the law of God in nature or scripture; yet they are not indifferent, and that because they are not enjoined. So that whilst our brethren allow the determination of indifferent things to authority, they take away with one hand what they give with the other. For according to their principles, there is nothing left for authority to determine, as to the ordering of God's public worship. For one would think that the matter of such determination should be those things which God hath left to our liberty. But you are mistaken if you think so; since for this very reason that they are left at liberty, it is unlawful for one man, be his authority what it will, so long as it is but human authority, to determine in them for another; and it is unlawful for this other man to submit to his determination. For we are told that "the light

[k] Case on Behalf of Diss. p. 3. [l] P. 3.

of nature directeth us to use the most convenient circumstances for the worship of God, and the law of nature will enforce men in doing actions, to use time and place. For other things, such as the postures of prayers, or words used in prayer, the holy scripture is every where as sufficient to us as the law of Moses was to the Jews, which commanded, as to the passover, the offering a lamb or a kid, and left it to the discretion and conveniency of the offerer to determine which.——So for standing, sitting, or kneeling at prayer, God indeed hath left the one or the other of them to us not determined, leaving it to our choice or conveniency which to use, who sometimes cannot use standing, another time cannot use kneeling [m]. He hath commanded us to pray, and that with our voice as well as our hearts; but that he hath not told us what words we should always use.——God hath therefore left us at liberty what words to use, as he left the Jews at liberty whether to offer a lamb or a kid.——And Moses might by the same authority have tied up all the Jews to offer none but kids, or none but lambs, as superiors can tie up inferiors to use none but such or such words in prayer. And the Jews might every whit as lawfully have obeyed Moses in such a command, as we can obey any superiors in such a case." That is, "it had been unlawful in the Jews to have obeyed Moses in such a case, and it would be unlawful in the dissenters, and it is unlawful in us to obey our superiors in any of their determinations concerning things in God's worship which God hath left at liberty."

How this author hath pursued his argument, is not my business to consider. It is sufficient for my design to shew the vast difference between the grounds upon which we charge the church of Rome with requiring unlawful terms of communion with her in her worship, and those upon which the same fault is imputed to the church of England by the dissenters. We prove our charge, by shewing that God hath forbidden what that church requires to be done: they prove theirs against us by shewing that God hath left those things at liberty which are required in this church. We shew that the church of Rome enjoins practices that are unlawful for any man to determine himself to: they shew that this church en-

[m] Case, p. 29, 30.

joins practices which are not unlawful for a man to choose for himself, but for authority to choose for him. The things they except against in our communion are in themselves indifferent, and they cannot make them unlawful otherwise than by fetching a compass about, and pretending that they are then unlawful to be done, when our superiors require us to do them.

And now I may leave it to the judgment of all men that can consider a case without great prejudice, whether there be reason to forsake the church of England upon the account of unlawful terms of communion pretended to be in her worship, as well as upon the same account to leave the communion of the church of Rome; that is, whether a thing may become unlawful in God's worship for not being commanded by God, and for being enjoined by man; because every thing that God hath forbidden is neither lawful to be commanded by man, nor to be done, though it be so commanded. I know not whether some of our brother's party may not think that he hath given us too much advantage, by reducing the question to this state. But I think it is not his weakness, but the weakness of his cause, that has led him to it. For they are not able to prove the unlawfulness of the present impositions in order to communion, but upon such principles as these are. And I may appeal to mankind concerning the difference of the case between them against us, and us against the church of Rome in this matter; that the reason of our separation from Rome will not justify their separation from us, nor that the reason upon which we challenge them of schism, can fly in our own faces, when the church of Rome challengeth us of the same crime. But I shall say no more of this point at present, because I foresee occasion of resuming it presently in another place.

But this author offereth another reason also of the unlawfulness of those things that are required, and that because they have been and still are used in idolatrous services, and are not of themselves necessary to be used by us. I think I may venture to say, that this reason has been sufficiently exposed. But my business is to note the difference of the case: we separate from Rome, because otherwise we must communicate with her in her idolatry, which is necessary not to be done:

the dissenters separate from us, because otherwise they must do some things not necessary to be done, which have been and still are done by idolaters.

Again, the dissenters, as he says, "scruple kneeling in the act of receiving the communion, because there is an *objectum motivum*," as he calls it, "before their eyes." I think he means, because the elements are worshipped by the papists, who say they believe them to be no longer elements, but God himself. And to kneel therefore when we take these into our hands, is to give some occasion to others to think that we worship the elements; and therefore the dissenters question the lawfulness of an adoration of God under these circumstances. I am glad if it be but question and scruple, though I am sorry it is so much. But whether they only scruple kneeling upon this account, or more than scruple it, (for this gentleman does not always speak so distinctly as I could wish,) there is however this difference in the case; that whereas one principal reason why we separate from papists is because we dare not worship bread, which without all question is idolatry; one reason why the dissenters separate from us is, because we who have so loudly declared against that idolatry do worship (not the bread, which we believe to retain its own nature, but) God only, as they themselves confess, when we partake of that bread.

And here I may be content to let the matter rest, that whether we consider the particulars pretended to be unlawful in both communions, or the way taken by us to prove those unlawful which the church of Rome would impose upon us, and that way which the dissenters use to make out the like charge against the church of England, the difference is so great, that the charge of schism, which upon this account, viz. "of terms of communion in worship," we bring against the dissenters for separating from us, cannot with reason and modesty be returned upon ourselves for separating from the church of Rome.

I have now compared the two cases, with respect to authority and terms of communion. But before I proceed to compare them with respect to the plea of conscience, I shall endeavour to represent some other differences of the case that are plainly consequent upon one or both of those differences

which we have already considered. And they are these three:

1. The difference of the case with respect to separation for greater purity of worship and ordinances.

2. The difference with respect to that common question, "Who shall be the judge?"

3. The difference of the principles upon which either side separates, as to their tendency either to maintain or to overthrow one communion amongst Christians.

1. With respect to separation for greater purity of worship and ordinances. The dissenters say, that "if for greater purity England separated from Rome, others also may for greater purity separate from England." And because I perceive this consequence is insisted upon, not only by well-meaning people, but by some that would not be thought the meanest of the party, I shall examine it as thoroughly as I can, hoping to gain the reader's pardon, if I repeat some things that have been already discoursed, but which are necessary to be observed, in order to a right understanding of this matter.

The ground I shall proceed upon in discoursing of this consequence is, that we and the dissenters do not understand the same thing by *greater purity*. By the impurity or corruption of the Roman communion, which is the principal reason of our departing from it, we understand the sinfulness thereof; and by separating from that church for greater purity, we thereby mean forsaking her communion, that we might not partake in her sins; which otherwise we could not avoid. To make good this charge, that her communion was and still is corrupted in this sense, we have but that one plain way already declared. We shew that there are several doctrines which she professeth, several things in her worship which she practiseth, that are plainly contrary to the truth which God hath revealed, and to the laws which he hath delivered to us: and that those errors and these practices are not of a slight nature, but that they grate upon the very foundations of Christianity: and moreover, that she exacteth the profession of the one, and the doing of the other, from all her members. So that when we say that we separate from that church for greater purity, we mean, that there are several impure or sinful conditions of communion required in that church, with which, as she has ordered the

matter, we must pollute ourselves, and of which we ourselves must be guilty, if we communicate with her at all. And therefore it was necessary for us to depart from her, because it is most necessary not to deny the truths, or break the laws of God. Therefore also by saying that we separated for greater purity, we mean not that we have forsaken but some corruptions only of the Roman worship, as if our communion were now indeed purer than theirs, though not so pure as it ought to be. This is not our meaning; for we contend that this church hath purged away all those practices, and abolished all those rules relating to God's worship, which are contrary to his word; and by consequence, that there is no impurity left in the conditions of our communion; so that any man whose conscience is rightly informed, may communicate with us without sin. Wherefore this comparative expression of separating for greater purity from the Roman church, respecteth the state of that church, supposing indeed that all the conditions of that church's communion were not impure, but withal implying that some of them, and those truly not a few, were so; and therefore that her communion was not pure enough for any Christian to join in it with a good conscience. Thus I have shewn what we understand by separating for greater purity, and how we maintain this plea in answer to the church of Rome.

Now therefore, although the dissenters use the same plea in words in answer to us, yet if they do not understand the same thing by it that we do, nor attempt to make it out by shewing wherein our communion is corrupted with such conditions as oblige the members of this church to do what God hath forbidden, or to neglect what he hath commanded them to do, or to contradict what he hath revealed: this plea, I say, if it be not made out by such particulars as these, is by them weakly brought to justify their separation from us, by our example in separating from Rome. And though the general pretence may serve to delude the injudicious people, who have not learned to distinguish between reasons and colours; yet it will neither acquit them before God, nor in the judgment of wise men, who can easily discern, and will impartially consider the difference of the case. It is indeed a plausible colour for their separation from us, that we separated from Rome for

greater purity: and but a colour, unless they could shew wherein our communion is impure, or, which is all one, what are those conditions thereof which be sinful or repugnant to the laws of God.

But what is it that they mean by this "greater purity of worship" for which they separate? Wherein doth this purity consist? Let reasonable men judge. Extemporary prayers are more pure than forms of prayer: to receive the communion sitting or standing, is more pure than to receive it kneeling: to omit the sign of the cross after baptism, is more pure than to use it: and the minister's praying in a coat or a cloke, is more pure than to pray in a surplice. But till they can shew that our way, in any of these instances, is forbidden by God, either they cannot justly pretend that it is impure; or at least they must confess that they mean by *impurity* something else, when they charge it upon us, than what we mean by it, when we charge it upon the communion of the Romish church, and therefore that they do not use the same plea against us that we produce against that. For with us impurity is sin, and an impure communion is a communion in which we cannot communicate without sin, i. e. without transgressing the law of God. But as far as I can see, impurity with them must go for something else, that is, either for doing things that God hath not forbidden, or for the omitting of things that he hath not commanded. And if the church hath power in indifferent things, and that be pure, against which there is no law; their pretence of separating for greater purity is altogether groundless, unless they can prove that they cannot have communion with us, without neglecting to do what God commands, or doing what he forbids.

Therefore the former discourse concerning terms of communion, shews that there is a vast difference between this plea, as it is used by us, and as it is used by the separatists against us. For we do not separate from the communion of the Roman church upon this principle, that "the church hath no power to make orders for the worship of God in matters that are left to our liberty, or to prescribe rites and ceremonies that are not contrary to God's word." But upon this principle, as far as we can judge, do the dissenters separate from us; and the main controversy we have with them is, whether it be

within the compass of human authority to prescribe in things of this sort; and consequently, whether it be part of the duty of Christians to submit unto, and in their practice to comply with such prescriptions. They will not deny, that we shew that church of Rome where the scripture forbids what the church requires, and this, through all those instances of their corruption in worship, for which we pretend it necessary for us to depart from her communion. Now if the dissenters can shew the like of any condition in our communion, I promise to recant all that I have said in behalf of the church of England, under this head of the "purity of her communion;" and instead of vindicating my defence of our church as to this particular, to depart from her communion in that thing, whatever may come of it from this time forwards. And I trust that through the grace of God, I should not for the sake of any worldly interest, either resist the evidence of any clear argument tending to my conviction, or act in contradiction to a convinced conscience and judgment, in a matter of this high nature.

But to deal plainly, the dissenters seem to be very sensible of the uneasiness of this task, that is, of proceeding in the same method to convince us of unlawful terms of communion, which we use against the church of Rome. They go another way to work, and it would make an indifferent man suspect their cause, to see what shifts they use, to make good their pretence. They demand of us where scripture commands, or what need there is of those things which our church requires. They pretend that the liberty of Christians does in great part consist in this, that they ought not by man to be determined to any practice in God's worship, to which God, or the nature of the thing, has not determined them. They say that the appointment of significant rites and ceremonies, is a derogation from the royalty of Christ and the sufficiency of the scriptures. And to give some countenance to these pretences, they would persuade us that the scripture itself intimates some such thing, as if nothing were to be done in God's worship but what is by God himself commanded, excepting always those circumstances necessary to action, the choice whereof must yet be left to every man, and, as we are now taught, authority must not so much as meddle with them. To this

purpose we are told of the pattern in the mount, of strange fire that was not commanded, and of the unlawfulness of adding to or diminishing from the law of Moses: as if these places of scripture made all impositions concerning the order of Divine worship as unlawful, as the express word of God shews so many particular practices of the Roman church in her worship to be. But leaving these attempts of theirs to be examined in the more particular controversies; who sees not what a wide difference there is in the particular management and application of this general proposition, that we must not communicate with any church in impurity, between the church of England against the papists, and between the dissenters against the church of England? For we are secure against all just accusation from the church of Rome, if this one proposition be true, that "it is not in the power of any church to dispense with the laws of God, or to absolve us from our obligation to keep them." But the dissenters cannot avoid the justice of our charge against them, unless this proposition be true also, that "the church hath no authority in things of an indifferent nature, to prescribe such in Divine service, as shall be thought most agreeable to the general rules of reason and scripture, and most suitable to the great ends of Christianity." Now if what we say in these things will hang well together, that is, if the former proposition be true, and if the truth thereof shall not hinder the latter from being false; then with very good reason may we pretend that it was necessary for us to separate from Rome for greater purity, or for the avoiding of sin: but the dissenters will have no just ground from our example to pretend the same, in their separation from the church of England.

And, I think, the difference is plainly enough confessed by those of the separation that hold occasional communion with our church to be lawful, that is, who think it lawful to communicate actually with us upon occasion, though they are all the while members of separate churches. For if our communion is polluted with sinful conditions, how comes it to pass that this occasional communion, as they call it, should be more lawful than constant communion? Unless they will say it is lawful sometimes to break God's commandments, but not lawful to do it ordinarily. But I know they will not say so.

And therefore when they say that they cannot without sin become members of our churches, though without sin they can sometimes join in our public worship; they seem to suppose that the way of worship in the separate meetings is more perfect than ours, in respect of those things which do not fall under any particular law of God, but may be ordered better or worse, as men are more or less prudent, or as they take greater or less heed to the general rules of reason and scripture concerning things indifferent. And withal, that there is so much more gravity, decency, simplicity, and tendency to edification in the outward mode of their worship, that it would be a sin to let it fall, or in practice to prefer ours before it. But by this, I think, any body may see what a difference there is between what we and these men mean by the same pretence of refusing to communicate, where it cannot be done without sin. For our meaning is, that there are such conditions of communion in the church of Rome, that as the case stands it should be a wickedness to communicate with her at any time. But they mean no such thing against us, since without scruple they can sometimes communicate with us; only they suppose they have set up a more perfect communion: and they do not forsake our communion as unlawful in itself, but they think it their duty to prefer a better before it. So that in this pretence for separation, these men do not understand purity in opposition to sin, or breaking any of God's commandments; but purity in opposition to a less convenient or prudent ordering of the outward mode of worship: that is, they do not understand the same thing by separating from the communion of a church for greater purity, that we understand by it: nor can they urge that pretence for separation from us, as we do urge it against the church of Rome: and consequently our reason of separating from that church for greater purity does not hold to justify their separation from us.

Upon consideration of the whole matter, I hope the papists will find no protestant of our church easy and silly enough to be deluded by such superficial colours as these are. "You see, say they, what is become of leaving the communion of the church for greater purity. The protestants at first forsook the catholic, i. e. Roman church for greater pu-

rity. And do not the Presbyterians forsake the church of England for greater purity? And so do the Independents set up their congregations for greater purity. And the Anabaptists, for the same reason, depart from them: and the Quakers from them all: and there is no end of breaking communion upon such pretences as these are; which are as good against yourselves, as they are against us: and therefore you may choose whether you will return to the church from which you first brake away, under pretence of reformation, or whether you will follow your principle till you are refined into Quakers, or, it may be, into a more absurd and mad sort of people than the Quakers themselves are."

It is a lamentable thing to see men of common understanding cozened by such palpable fallacies as these are; though it is not to be wondered at, that the agents of the Roman church make the best use of them they can; since a foul cause must be beholden to such artifices as these to blanch it over.

But, I pray, might there not be such corruptions in your church, that we with good reason might pretend it necessary to forsake your communion for one that was purer; and yet there may be none in ours to give any man just cause to leave us upon that pretence? Is it impossible that it should ever be just and necessary to depart from the communion of a church upon the account of her corruptions, because every man that has a mouth, and can speak, may say, if he please, that he separates for greater purity, though there be no reasonable cause to say so? or does it follow, that because our dissenters are mistaken in believing that we have given them sufficient cause to deal by us as we have done by you, that is, to forsake our communion for greater purity, as we have forsaken yours upon the same account, that therefore we also must needs proceed upon mistakes in so doing? What if some of them are erroneously persuaded that they ought not to submit to human orders in the performance of God's worship, if there be no particular warrant in God's word for them; may not we for all this be sure that your church requireth men to do things which God hath particularly forbidden? And if we be sure of this upon the plain grounds of reason and scripture, should we be afraid to reject your communion in these things,

because another sort of men are so unreasonably wilful as to reject our communion for the sake of things that are nothing like to these?

What if they, conceiving that our forms of prayer are not so edifying, that our rites and ceremonies are not so expedient, but rather unlawful, as being human inventions; what, I say, if they lay so great a stress upon these things, as to set up a communion which they fancy to be more refined and unexceptionable? May they not be to blame in all this, and yet the church of England not liable to blame, but worthy of commendation for departing from you in your Latin service, your half communion, your praying to dead men and women, your giving Divine honours to a wafer, and your other gross superstitions and idolatries?

Although our church had not ordered her public worship so discreetly and carefully, but that in sundry things it might be reformed to good purpose; it might yet by no means be necessary for any of her members to forsake her communion; but it would on the other hand be their great fault so to do, so long as she holds forth all the necessary means of salvation, and requires nothing to be professed, or to be done, that is contrary to God's word. But yet it would be necessary to renounce the profession of your impious errors, and to forsake you in all things wherein yourselves have departed from the plain truths of reason and Christianity, and contradicted the plain word and laws of God.

Though it may so happen that a man may do so foolishly, as to run himself upon great inconvenience in forsaking his habitation, because there is some petty disease reigning thereabouts, which is known to endanger no man's life; yet it may be wisely done by another man, to run his country when the plague is raging in every corner of it, especially if he could know that it were impossible for him to escape, if he should tarry there any longer: and yet, I suppose, you will not deny but the one as well as the other may pretend that he left his dwelling for the sake of better health and more safety. But I hope you will grant that the latter pretends this like a wise man, though the other does it like a fool. The case we are upon is muchwhat the same. From you it was necessary to depart for the sake of greater purity; but so it is not neces-

sary for you or others to depart from us; and yet others may take the same plea into their mouths against us, and we may not be able to help it, though we can well shew that they have no good reason for it.

And thus much for the difference of the case, with respect to separation for greater purity.

2. I proceed next to consider the difference with regard to that common question, "Who shall be the judge?"

The church of Rome arrogating to herself an infallibility in determining all questions of faith, doth, in pursuance of this claim, deny private persons the liberty of examining her definitions by the holy scriptures; and requireth them to acquiesce therein without more ado, as there is great reason they should, if indeed they have reason to believe her infallible. The church of England pretendeth not to infallibility; but we say, that she is not deceived in those points which she propounds to be believed as necessary to salvation, nor in rejecting those other articles which the Roman church propounds under that notion. And agreeably to this pretence she hath translated the holy scriptures into plain English, which are the best means whereby to judge, if what she says be not true; she not only alloweth the people to read them, but exhorteth and requireth them so to do, and causeth them to be publicly read to the people in all religious assemblies. By this means she traineth up her members to an ability of judging according to their several capacities; not only concerning all that she teaches them to believe, but also concerning all that she teaches them to do as their duty to God or man: so that she does not bring them up, as the church of Rome educates her children, to an implicit faith and a blind obedience.

But yet the superiors of our church do challenge a right to judge in some things for the people committed to their charge, and will not allow that in those things they shall judge for themselves; and they are "all things that relate to public order," and which may without sin be determined one way or another, but are capable of a better or worse determination; that is, all indifferent things. We say, that things of this nature being determined by a competent authority, ought, without further inquiry into the reasons of such determination, to

be done by all that are under that authority. As for the people's faith in God, and their obedience to him in doing what he hath commanded, and avoiding what he hath forbidden, our church does not resolve that into her own authority, but into those very reasons upon which they that are in authority do build their own faith and obedience; which reasons are included in the holy scriptures. But as to her appointments and orders in all things neither enjoined by God himself, nor by him forbidden, she expecteth submission to them upon the account of her own authority; and alloweth us not to judge of the expediency or inexpediency of them, before we will conform our practice to them. All which is so to be understood, that still her authority in these things is supposed to be of God, and the duty of submitting thereunto required in the general precepts of obedience to superiors.

But if any ask "[a]Who is to be judge of things indifferent, as to a man's practice, whether his own conscience, or his superior?" I answer, That as to a man's own practice, himself is to judge what things are indifferent, and which consequently come within the compass of human authority to determine. For it is plain enough, that by the same rule which sheweth us what is duty and what is sin, we come to judge of what is indifferent. And therefore when we grant to private persons a judgment of discretion concerning sin and duty, we cannot deny them the right to judge what is neither duty nor sin, but indifferent; which is the sum of what the author of the "[b]Case in Behalf of Dissenters," hath said upon that matter.

But then how can authority pretend to abridge private persons of judging, as to their own practice, concerning indifferent things? To this I answer in the words of the same author[c], where he acknowledges his adversary "to have said well to those who cannot comply with some things required in the Liturgy, and can say no more than that they think them not decent, not expedient, not orderly; for," says he, "no private person is a judge of these things." Which is an excellent saying, but so directly contrary to the main principles of his book, that I wonder how it fell from him. We are then to judge whether the things required by authority be indifferent, that is, lawful; and then to judge no further, as to our own practice;

[a] Case on Behalf of Dissenters, p. 2. [b] P. 3. [c] P. 36.

but for the decency and expediency, and orderliness of those things, to leave our superiors to answer to God for that. Our doing them is warranted by our rule, which is, to obey authority in all lawful things.

Now it is in things of this sort only, and with respect to order and decency, and prudent determination of what is most likely to edify, that our superiors pretend to judge for us what is, and what is not to be done, so as to "allow us no right to judge for ourselves about them." They claim obedience to their constitutions in these things, upon the account of their authority, which, when the matter is lawful, should without more ado conclude our practice.

Indeed they judge also what faith we are to profess, what worship we are to offer up to God, and what life we are to lead, in order to our receiving the benefit of church communion; and by consequence they do take upon them to judge in our behalf, what are the articles of the Christian faith, what is the true Christian worship, and what it is to lead a Christian life. For otherwise it were impossible that the ministers of Christ should discreetly and honestly use that authority which he hath left them, to take into the church those that are duly qualified for it, and to turn out those that are no longer fit to be continued in it. But still there is a great difference between their judging for us in those things, and in the matters aforementioned.

For they suppose that the articles of the Christian faith, and the commandments of God, are the same that ever they were from the beginning of the church; and that it is not in the power of man to make any alterations in these standing rules of Christianity, and that obedience is not due to any authority of man going about to make such alterations. From whence it follows, that private persons should be able to judge wherein true Christianity consists, as well as their superiors, that they also may offer up unto God a reasonable service. To which end the Bible is put into all men's hands; the meaning of the scriptures is opened in our religious assemblies; the people are trained up to understand the particulars of Christian faith and obedience, with the reasons and motives thereof, that, as we said before, they may be able to resolve their faith into the same grounds of Divine authority, upon which the bishops and

pastors of the church do themselves believe. And we do unanimously acknowledge, that if this church makes the profession of false doctrine, or the breaking of any of God's commandments, a condition of her communion; they that upon this account separate from her communion are before God clear of the guilt of schism in so doing. And here she makes all private persons judges for themselves, whether she doth this or not, and that by training them up in the best way she can, to be able to inform themselves in these matters.

But the case is otherwise with respect to indifferent things relating to God's worship. For though our superiors profess that they are not to meddle, in adding to or taking from the faith and the commandments of God; and though they appeal to private persons, that they do not in fact usurp an authority to this purpose which they profess to disclaim; yet in these indifferent things they claim a power to add or diminish, or to make such expedient alterations as they shall think fit to be made; and this without being any way accountable to the people for their discretion in so doing, before their orders be obeyed: and we say, that whoever they are that will not be concluded by authority in these things, but upon any pretence whatsoever taken from them do break away from the communion of the church, they are guilty of schism in so doing. And this must be truly said, if what that author himself hath said be true, "that no private person is judge of those things."

And now I think any one may see a vast difference between the claim of the church of Rome, to be the only judge of what she imposes upon her members, and the claim of the church of England to the same, with reference to hers; that in the former case it is unjust and unreasonable; but in the latter, very equal and necessary, and which no man, that is not overruled by a fit of passion and prejudice, but must allow to a competent authority.

Whereas therefore we have considered the points in question between the dissenters and ourselves, with respect to prudence, expedience, and better edification; we say withal, that this is more than we were bound to do in order to the conviction of dissenters, that it is their duty to conform to the liturgy and the laws of the church. And that because the authority by which they are established obligeth us to submission, (if there

be nothing in them to make our communion with the church sinful,) though we should be so arrogant as to think we could have ordered these matters with more discretion, if our advice had been taken. But if, setting aside the consideration of authority, we have moreover shewn, that upon all accounts of decency and expediency, forms of prayer are to be preferred before extemporary prayers, and that the particulars now excepted against are so far from betraying any want of judgment in those that prescribed them, that they are indications of the great wisdom and caution wherewith they proceeded; we have not, I say, performed this, believing it necessary to prove the separation to be unjustifiable, but intending to shew thereby that it is more inexcusable. And although it was no part of our design to render those of the separation more inexcusable by this performance, yet I beseech them to take care that it happens not so in the event.

If, after all, it be asked what an inferior is to do, that judgeth those things to be unlawful which his superiors, in full persuasion that they are indifferent at least, require him to do? I answer, as all men that have a sense of honesty will answer, that whilst he is persuaded that they are unlawful, he ought to forbear them. But then, as no man of understanding will deny, he is yet a sinner before God for refusing that obedience to a lawful authority which he ought to perform; since in order to the performance of it, he might and ought to understand his duty better than he does. For as the forementioned author says[d], "Things indifferent, and things commanded and forbidden, are not things which we fancy, which indeed are so." If the light of nature and the holy scriptures are a rule of what is duty and what is sin, they are a rule also of what is indifferent: and the same light that shews what is necessary to be done, and what is necessary not to be done, does withal shew what is lawful to be done or to be forborne. And as an erroneous persuasion that something is lawful which God hath forbidden, will not acquit any man that hath the means of better information, from sin, in doing according to his persuasion of the lawfulness of what he does; so neither will any man's erroneous persuasion that his superiors require him to do what is unlawful, when the thing itself is lawful, acquit him of

[d] Page 4.

the guilt of disobedience in following that persuasion. In what degrees this or that man's ignorance in these things is culpable, God only knoweth for the most part, and therefore he only can *judge the world in righteousness*. But more or less culpable it is in all that have means of knowledge. And it concerns every one of us, as we love our own souls, to consider impartially what God hath commanded and what he hath forbidden in his word, and consequently what he has left to our liberty; and that because his word is a rule sufficiently plain as to these things.

For if those to whom God hath given authority, being corrupted in their judgments by passion or any worldly interest, take those things to be lawful which God hath forbidden, and impose them upon all that are subject to their rule; their persuasion shall not hinder their being grievous sinners against God, nor exempt them from being answerable to him for abusing their authority, and for all the pernicious consequences thereof in drawing some men into wicked practices, and in punishing others for well doing. And by like reason, if subjects, not rightly attending to the rule of their duty, are grown to a persuasion that those things are unlawful which their superiors enjoin them to do, [whereas indeed they are indifferent,] and thereupon refuse to do them; this persuasion shall not acquit them before God, nor hinder them from being answerable for abusing their liberty, and for all the pernicious consequences of their disobedience, in setting a bad example, in breaking the peace of the church, in disturbing public order, and, which very often happens, in giving occasion to the worst of men to profane the name of God, and to speak evil and blasphemous things of his holy religion. I say, ignorance will help no more in this latter case than in the former, because it is as easy for the subject to know what is indifferent, as for the ruler to know what is unlawful. These considerations, I confess, do more properly belong to the last plea of conscience; but it was very convenient to touch upon them here, where we have been inquiring what things they are in which authority is to overrule private judgment, and to determine the practice of inferiors; and withal, how great a difference there is between the church of Rome and the church of England, in answering this common question, "Who shall be the judge?"

3. I come now to the last difference consequent upon the two first, respecting authority and terms of communion, and that is, the difference of the principles upon which each side separates, as to their tendency either to maintain or to overthrow one communion amongst Christians.

This will fall under a double consideration.

1. That of maintaining one communion amongst Christians in this kingdom.

2. That of maintaining one communion with foreign churches.

I shall begin with the first.

1. As to unity at home. The Romanist pretends, that upon the grounds of our reformation, divisions and separations will be endless amongst us: we also pretend, that the principles of the separation from the church of England tend to the same; but with what difference of reason on each side, it is easy to judge by what has been said already. We have reason to think there would be no end of divisions if a competent authority, enjoining nothing but what is lawful to be done in the communion of Christians, is not to be obeyed: and certainly this may be very true, although it be false, that to submit to the authority of the Roman church, and that too in things unlawful to be done by any Christian, or by any man, is necessary to prevent divisions. We say further, that there can be no need of an ecclesiastical tyranny on the one hand, and a blind obedience on the other, to keep those Christians together in one communion that live within one jurisdiction; if a due use of authority in lawful superiors on the one hand, and a dutiful subjection of inferiors thereunto on the other, would do the business, as most certainly it would. But if some men will be stubborn, we cannot help that, any more than we can hinder other men from being tyrants. But we are sure it concerns both the one and the other, as much as their salvation concerns them, not to be so. And if this consideration will not keep them within bounds, and make them wise and honest, they must answer it to God one day. And in the mean time, subjects that suffer unjustly for refusing to obey the wicked command of their superiors, must bear it as patiently as they can, and by their prayers to God, and their meek obedience to their rulers in all lawful things, endeavour

to recover themselves into their good opinion. And superiors that are vexed with froward and disorderly subjects, who break Christian communion, when no just cause is given them, must do what they can to lay the truth before them; and if this be to no purpose, they must use their authority as prudently as they can, to prevent the evil example from going further.

We are sensible what advantages the papists make to themselves against our reformation by the examples of dissenters, and the dissenters by the papists. When the papists have men and women of weak understandings to deal with, they tell them that the reformation is run out into several sects and parties. and no man can tell where separation will end: if therefore you love unity, return to the church of Rome, where we are all of one faith and communion. The separatists, on the other side, set off their claims to an unrestrainable liberty of choosing in what communion to worship God, by shewing to their proselytes the tyranny of the Roman church. Now we of the church of England are as much against the tyrannical usurpations of that church as the dissenters, and as much for unity against causeless separation, and for obedience to lawful authority, against stubbornness, as the Romanists. And both these upon principles that consist well with one another. We say, on the one side, that a foreigner should not affect an authority over us, and that those who have the authority ought to require nothing in the communion of Christians but what is agreeable to God's word, and lawful to be done: and on the other side, that in such things we ought to do what is commanded, and by no means to run into a separate communion. Upon these principles we departed from Rome, and stick where we are; and I trust, that through the grace of God we shall neither go back to Rome nor run after the separation, there being no need either of the former to preserve unity, or of the latter to avoid tyranny.

To draw to a conclusion of this matter: the main reason of our separation from Rome was this, that we could not continue in her communion without doing things that God hath plainly forbidden: the reformation of our church was at first effected by, and hath all along stood upon good and just au-

thority: she does not only hold forth all necessary means of salvation, but she requires nothing to be done in her communion that is contrary to God's word. And therefore we hold ourselves bound under the pain of schism to continue in her communion. Now I do not understand how upon these principles men must run into endless separations, unless it be impossible for us (whatever we pretend) to know who are our lawful governors, and to know what God hath commanded, and what he hath forbidden us to do. And I must confess if these things be impossible to be known, it is a foolish thing for any man to trouble his conscience with cases of communion and separation. As for the dissenters, (to omit the Independents, whose churches are in their very constitution inconsistent with submitting to a common authority in matters of worship,) they have forsaken us for nothing, but because the terms of our worship, or our two or three ceremonies in it, are not commanded in God's word, and because in things left otherwise to our liberty, we are determined by the authority of our superiors: or because these things might be better ordered, and because the communion which they have taken upon them to set up in opposition to the church of England, is purer than ours, though ours be a lawful communion. Now these principles do indeed tend to endless separations, unless these men could tell us either how we could be united in one communion, though "all of us believed it unlawful to obey a competent authority that should presume to determine any indifferent things relating to God's worship; or what particular communion that is from which it would be unlawful to separate even upon this principle; that there is no obligation to communion, where there is any thing possible to be mended in the outward mode of God's worship." In a word, they that separate upon just and necessary causes, as the church of England hath done from the church of Rome, and stop there, are not to be charged with the consequence of their practice who separate without such causes, as the dissenters do from our church. And if they have proceeded further than they are able to justify themselves by the principles of our reformation, they must answer for it themselves.

2. The principles of our reformation do not obstruct our

communion with any true church of Christ abroad, where there are no unlawful terms of communion. But so do the principles of the dissenters' separation.

By the same reason that our governors determine one common order of worship and discipline for the churches over which they have authority; the governors of other churches also may determine in these things, according to their prudence for the people subject to their authority. And we, who blame the church of Rome for interposing her authority amongst us, with whom she has no more right to meddle than any other foreign church has, must in all things that come within the liberty of Christians, leave other churches that are as independent upon us as we are upon Rome, to their authority and liberty. And this is what our church hath expressly declared: "In these our doings we condemn no other nations, nor prescribe any thing but to our own people only: for we think it convenient that every country should use such ceremonies as they shall think best to the setting forth of God's honour and glory, and to the reducing of the people to a most perfect and godly living, without error or superstition; and that they should put away other things, which from time to time they perceive to be most abused, as in men's ordinances it often chanceth diversly in divers countries[d]." In pursuance of which excellent and truly catholic declaration, I would not only communicate with foreign churches, who differ from us in nothing but matters of form and ceremony; but if I were amongst them, I should observe their established modes and forms of worship; and though I thought our own way at home worthy upon all the accounts of order and decency and tendency to edification, to be preferred before theirs, yet I should not only conform to their way, but religiously abstain from creating any prejudice against it in the minds of Christian people in those places; and rather do all that honestly I could to bring those to a favourable opinion of it who were prejudiced against it. This is that rule which St. Austin thought should take place, not only in respect of those orders which were established by synods of bishops, but in respect also of those customs which had crept into particular churches,

[d] Preface to the Liturgy.

though it was hard to tell why or how they came in. "In things of this nature," saith he[e], "there is one most wholesome rule to be observed, that wherever we see any of them obtain, which are neither contrary to faith nor good manners, and have some tendency to edification, we should not only abstain from finding fault with them, but commend and practise them ourselves." And yet he complains in this very epistle of the multitude of ceremonious observations, in which particular churches differed from one another, and wishes that a reformation were made by authority. Thus in the foregoing epistle, speaking of the different observations of divers places, for instance, that some fast upon the Saturdays[f] and some do not, &c., and of all other things of this kind which are to be accounted indifferent; "Nothing," says he, "does more become the gravity and prudence of a Christian, than to do after the manner of that church into which he shall happen to come." Then he relates St. Ambrose his celebrated answer to Monica about things of this sort: "When I am at Rome, I fast on the Saturday; when I am here at Milan, I do not fast. And so when thou comest into any church, observe its customs, if thou wouldest neither give just cause of offence, nor take offence without cause." This advice St. Austin magnified highly, and the more he thought of it the better he liked it. "For," says he, "I have often with great sorrow considered how the minds of weak Christians have been disturbed by the quarrelsome humour and superstitious niceness of some of the brethren, who upon very slight grounds of reasoning, or being addicted to their own customs at home, or fond of what they have observed abroad, raise such wrangling disputes about things that cannot be clearly determined either by the authority of holy scripture, or the universal tradition of the church catholic, or by the consideration of what is best for reformation of life, that they seem to reckon nothing well done but what they do themselves." I shall add no more but that plain rule he gives elsewhere, to this purpose: "As to things in which the scripture defines nothing certain one way or the other, the custom of the church and the decrees of superiors are to be held for law[g]."

[e] Ad Januarium, Ep. 119. [f] Ep. 118. [g] Ad Casulanum, Ep. 86.

Now by this and much more that might be produced, we may see what the true notion of that liberty was which the ancient church allowed in matters of indifference. Not that there was no rule in the particular churches for the ordering and regulating of things of this sort: for we find the bishops did use their authority in these things over their charges, as St. Ambrose's words to St. Austin's mother about the forementioned case do plainly imply: "Resist not thy bishop in this matter; but what he does, that do thou without any scruple or dispute [h]:" and besides those particular customs, the variety and multitude of which St. Austin complains of, there were the determinations of episcopal synods [i] concerning things not determined in scripture, which he does not complain of. But their liberty consisted in this, that the rules of this sort established in the communion of any church were not imposed upon foreign churches; and catholic communion was not broken upon the account of different rites and customs. For though St. Austin was sorry to see the minds of some weak Christians troubled about questions of this kind, yet I do not find that he had any occasion given him to complain that communion was broken upon these accounts; as before his time it had been, by pope Victor's rashness in presuming to excommunicate the Asiatic bishops, for observing Easter upon the fourteenth of March, had not Irenæus and other wise and moderate persons seasonably interposed.

To apply all this to the matter in hand: since the church of Rome has made such things conditions of communion with her as are in St. Austin's phrase "contrary to faith and good manners," our separation from her upon this account does not at all hinder us from communicating with any true church in the world, that does not bar us out by unlawful terms of communion. For in things that God hath left at liberty, this church presumes not to interpose her authority abroad, nor refuses the communion of those churches whose customs and observations are different from ours, merely because they are different. Nay, let the church of Rome herself make an end of imposing false doctrines and wicked practices, and there will be an end of our separation from her: let her give over commanding things that God hath forbidden, and making articles

[h] Ep. 86. [i] Ep. 119.

of faith of things that are not revealed, but are indeed contrary to sense and reason, and she may for us use her authority at home in things indifferent; and though she be guilty of great abuses even in this kind, which need a reformation, yet I for my part should not break communion with her for these things, if she would thoroughly purge herself from the other. In the mean time we are of one communion with all foreign churches that presume not to change the faith, nor to contradict the laws of God; and this we should demonstrate by actual communion with them, if we had occasion to go abroad amongst them.

But this makes our case very different from that of the dissenters who separate from the church. For so long as they withdraw from our communion for the sake of ecclesiastical orders that are not contrary to God's word, and separate from us upon this principle, that every thing is unlawful in God's worship which is not commanded in scripture, but enjoined by our superiors only; they must not upon those principles have communicated with any church in the primitive times, when there were far more uncommanded rites and usages established, for the regulating of worship, than now there are in our church. And upon these principles they must not communicate with any reformed churches abroad, since how different soever the external modes of their worship may be from ours, yet some they all have, and that consisting of rules not determined by God's word, but by the law or custom of man. To New England they must not go, hoping to find a communion there lawful to be embraced upon these principles. The nonconformists to our liturgy and discipline that are there, will stand to their own orders concerning worship and discipline, and will make out by their church-authority, such as it is, what they cannot shew chapter and verse for. Our separatists, if they go thither, shall find no other use of their liberty allowed there, but conformity and compliance with that way of worship and government which there obtains. It is a plain case, that they who separate from our church upon the account of uncommanded rites and practices in God's worship, are something more obliged by this principle to avoid communion with all foreign churches; if rules for customs concerning things indifferent are to be found amongst them

all, as most certainly such rules, more or fewer, all of them have: for in the former case our separatists are disobedient to their proper governors and pastors, whose authority over them is more clear and indisputable than that of the governors of other churches, where they might happen to go. And therefore if they will not in things of this nature be determined by an authority at home, there is less reason to believe their consciences will suffer them to be determined therein by one abroad. I conclude therefore, that though our reformation leaves us free to communicate with all churches abroad, that do not require sinful terms of communion, as the church of Rome does; yet the separation of the dissenters from us proceeds upon grounds destructive of communion with any church in the world.

Indeed I believe most of our dissenters would communicate with several reformed churches abroad, but in so doing, they must depart from the principles upon which they separate at home; unless they can find a reformed church which exerciseth no authority in forms of prayer, nor in any indifferent things for the external regulation of public worship. But where such a church is to be found, I am yet to be informed.

And thus much concerning those differences of the case that are consequent upon the difference in point of authority and of terms of communion.

3. I come now to consider the last plea I propounded, which I confessed was not only common to both sides, but which also may be as truly alleged on the one side as on the other; and that is the plea of conscience.

The dissenters say that they separate from us, being persuaded that they ought so to do. And I must needs say, that some degree of integrity is implied in this plea, if honestly it be made; and such a degree it is, as without which no man can be an honest man. And therefore instead of going about to make it questionable, whether indeed it be out of conscience that they generally separate from us; I shall here admit it, adding only, that it stands every one of them in hand, to be as sure as they can be, that there is this reason at least for their separation from us. And I hope none of them will take this admonition in ill part, since I charge myself, and desire all the people of our own communion, to be careful that we be

fully persuaded in our own minds, that in duty to God we are bound to separate even from the church of Rome; and that we do not either choose one communion or refuse another for carnal and worldly interest. For we say the very same thing, viz. that in conscience we are persuaded that to forsake the communion of the church of Rome, and of every church in her communion, as the terms of her communion now stand, is a necessary duty. But then if we had no more to say for ourselves than this comes to, we should make but a very weak apology for our separation from the Roman church, and have some reason to be ashamed of it.

For, to deal plainly, this is no more than what a Turk or a Jew may say for refusing to become a Christian, and no more than what we may truly say too; that is, that his conscience will not let him be a Christian, since he is verily persuaded that Christianity is not from God, so far as it is contrary to the religion by him professed. Now this, if it be truly said, shall make him a more honest Turk or Jew, than another that is in his conscience convinced of the truth, which with his mouth he denies, yet it shall not make that which he professes to be more true in his mouth, than it is in the mouth of a hypocrite. And I suppose no Christian will say, that his pretence of conscience, though it be not mere pretence, will acquit him of sin in rejecting the gospel of Christ when it is offered to him with reasonable evidence. From whence I think it follows, that the misinformation of his conscience, or his erroneous persuasion, is his sin. And therefore though it be true, that we do separate from the Roman communion out of conscience, yet whether we do well upon the whole matter in this, or not, must be judged of by those reasons upon which we are persuaded that so we ought to do, and not merely by our persuasion itself. For otherwise we should lay down a principle that would vindicate a man in the greatest errors that can be professed, and justify him in the most wicked things that can be done, under an erroneous persuasion that those are not errors, and that these are not wicked things.

Wherefore I beseech all those that forsake the communion of the church of England, upon a general and loose persuasion of which they are able to give little or no particular account, that they do well in forsaking us, and that they should sin in

communicating with us: I beseech them, I say, to lay this to heart, and a most evident truth it is, that if their persuasion be erroneous, they are, notwithstanding their persuasion, guilty of schism; and withal, that if they are persuaded this is no great matter, as I plainly perceive they are for the most part, yet if schism be a very great and aggravated sin, neither will their ignorance acquit them of guilt proportionable to the heinous nature of the sin. For my part, I should not envy their safety, could I believe they had reason to be secure upon giving this account of their separation, and that honestly too, that they are satisfied in conscience about it, and there is an end. But I have reason to warn them of the danger of such presumption, since many of the Jews and heathens that delivered up the servants of Christ to be killed for their profession, were doubtless satisfied in conscience that they did God service in so doing. And for ought I know, some that have served the ends of the bloody church of Rome, may have been so persuaded too. But do you think that God will give them thanks for what they did, because of their good meaning? And if you do not think so, you have no reason to conclude that you shall be acquitted from your separation, if a sin it be, and a great one too, merely because you do not believe it to be a matter of any great consequence, or indeed any fault at all, but rather a duty.

I do not know to what purpose Divine truth is made known to us by nature and by scripture, and the laws of God are written upon our hearts, and these and more laws besides written in the gospel, if we might yet be safely ignorant of our duty as we are men, or as we are Christians, and of that truth which is necessary to the performance of that duty. To what end hath God made known his will, and given us the means of knowing it, and a reasonable nature to make us capable of using those means, if ignorance might still be pleaded in our justification? For my part, I cannot tell, and let him that cannot, look to it, that no prejudice or passion, nor laziness, nor worldly interest, lie at the bottom of his heart, either to hinder his searching, or if he searches, to hinder his finding out that Divine truth, which is the rule of his duty. I say this the rather, because nobody will deny that it is well said. But it fares with this as it does with many other good

sayings, it is still by all acknowledged to be good, but it is by few well applied. But thus far at least I may desire those of the separation to apply it to themselves, that if they unnecessarily divide themselves from the communion of this church, the persuasion of their conscience that they are bound to divide from us, will by no means bring them off in so doing from the condemnation that belongs to that sin.

To break the communion of Christians is quite contrary to the ordinance and institution of Christ, who made his church one body; and the consequences of it are very destructive of all the great ends of Christianity, and in such cases the blame is very great wherever it lies; and I will be bold to say, it could not be very great, if it were hard for an honest and unprejudiced mind to find what ought and what ought not to be done to maintain unity of communion amongst Christians. And therefore it concerns every man, as he tenders the salvation of his soul, to look to it, that the cause of his separation be just. For this is one of those cases wherein a mere persuasion of conscience will not secure a man acting according to it, from sinning against God. And from hence it is evident that this plea, "that we cannot in conscience hold communion with the church of Rome," may in our mouths be a very good plea against the papists, as without question it is, if our consciences are rightly informed as to the points controverted between them and us; but the same plea in the mouths of the dissenters against the church of England may not be good, as most certainly it is not, if they are persuaded that our church hath given them just cause for their separation, when there is indeed no such matter. And therefore we may at least hope, that they will all of them now seriously apply themselves to consider the merits of the cause between them and us; which they are now in an especial manner bound to do, since the charity of the ministers of this city hath made the doing of it easy to all persons that will be at the pains to judge for themselves, and that by bringing down the particular questions in controversy between them and us to the capacity of ordinary Christians. And if they will not use this opportunity that is given them to consider these things, they will have the more to answer to God; and they most of all that dissuade them from it.

To conclude this point: whereas the papists declaim against

our separation from them, under pretence of conscience, as if this had shewn the way to all sorts of sectaries to separate from us upon the same pretence; we hope that all persons who are not willing to be deceived, will be able to distinguish between a misguided conscience on the one hand, and a well-informed conscience on the other; and then proceed to examine the reasons of our separation, whether they be not just and necessary; and if they find them so to be, that they will acquit us from all their blame who separate without such reasons. For it is very foolish and unjust, not to allow the pretence of conscience to be good in any case, because it is not so in all cases. Surely, if one man's conscience tell him that he may and ought to rebel, while himself does not believe that it is rebellion he is going about; this hinders not, but another man may lawfully and justly pretend conscience for his loyalty and duty to the government. And though in some places of the world there are sovereign princes who extend their authority for the maintaining of damnable errors, and the suppressing of God's holy truth, and all the while believe that they use their power as they ought to do; yet this shall not hinder but that princes who believe and profess the true religion, and withal protect and encourage it with their authority as much as they can, being fully persuaded that so they ought to do, that they, I say, shall for this receive God's thanks and rewards, while the former shall go without them. In like manner, conscience may be pretended for disobeying the just laws of that authority which God hath set in the world and in the church; but this shall not hinder his plea from being good, who pretends conscience for refusing to commit idolatry, though all the powers under heaven should require him so to do. Men may by mistake think they do God good service in murdering his servants; for this has been done by you of the church of Rome. And if in such plain cases as these your understandings have been so foully corrupted, it is not so greatly to be wondered at, that the judgments of other men are so perverted by interest and passion, as to believe themselves countermanded by God in things required by their superiors; but in which it would not be their sin, but a performance of their duty to obey. And yet I hope this answer, *Whether it be better to obey God or man, judge ye,* was once truly and pertinently made, and

may be so again. And so much for the difference of the case, with respect to conscience, which was the last thing to be considered.

And now I know that all this will signify very little to any man that brings not an honest mind with him to consider it, or who had rather take his opinions in these things upon trust, than be at the pains to judge for himself. But why should a man disparage himself so much, as not to use that understanding which God hath given him in matters that concern his salvation? Why should he be such an enemy to himself, as not to let go a dangerous mistake, when he may enjoy the truth instead of it, if he will use reasonable diligence to consider what is said on both sides? Give me leave to put you in mind of your duty in this case, in the words of an ancient Christian writer: "In all matters of practice and duty, it concerns every man to use his own [k] judgment and discretion, in searching for truth, and in weighing what is fit to be done, rather than to be betrayed into error and sin, by such a credulous reliance upon others, as if himself had not the reason of a man, and were incapable of consideration. God has given to every man his share of wit both to find out some things by himself, and to weigh those which he hears from others. It is natural to all men to love wisdom, and to desire the knowledge of the truth. And they make fools of themselves, who without discretion take the words of their leaders for all that they say, and follow them more like beasts than like reasonable creatures;" which words are not so to be taken, as if it were dishonourable or dangerous to any man to make use of the help of others in learning the truth: for this were to destroy the use of the ministry in the church of Christ, and to take away the benefit of mutual endeavours to lead one another into a right understanding of our duty. But for all this, it may be a very foolish and unmanly part, and it may betray us into very dangerous errors, not to use our own judgment at all in matters of sin and duty, and in opinions leading to the one or the other; but instead thereof, to rely altogether upon their authority whom we have taken for our guides. This is what we say both to the people of the popish and of the dissenting party; that if they would apply themselves with ordinary diligence, and with a

[k] Lactant. lib. 2. De Origine Erroris. sect. 7.

sincere mind, to find out the truth in these cases, they would not meet with any great difficulty to perplex them in the way; especially if they whose authority they very much rely upon would speak as plainly and clearly to the points in question, as, without vanity, I may say, we have hitherto done.

We do not desire them to stop their ears against those whom they follow at present: all that we beg of them is, that they would not take every thing upon trust that others tell them in these matters, but hear what we also have to offer to them, and not only hear, but consider and weigh it with the best judgment they have. And let me say this to all those whom I now speak of, whether papists or dissenters, that if you set yourselves with a sincere desire of being rightly informed, to compare our reasons with them whom hitherto you have trusted, some advantage you will gain by it, whatever the success be. For if the truth be not on our side, you will in all likelihood get this benefit by it, to be confirmed in your own way, upon better grounds than you had before. But if it be, it is then to be hoped that through the grace of God you will discern it and entertain it, for which blessing you and we shall have great reason to yield our hearty thanks and praises to the Father of lights, who *giveth wisdom to them that ask him.* But if you should be so unhappily prejudiced on the wrong side as to miss this benefit, yet let me tell you it will turn to some good account for you at last, that you took pains to be better informed; and that you were not altogether wanting to yourselves to come to a right understanding of your duty in these particulars, by disposing yourselves to impartiality, and by reading and meditating and praying in all this for the illumination of God's holy Spirit.

And now, I trust, there is little need to tell you, that if your leaders discourage you from taking this pains, it may justly make you suspect that your cause will not bear the trial. If they would keep up your confidence by their own, and all the while divert you from comparing one thing with another, and from trying what is said on both sides; you have sufficient cause to question either their honesty or their understanding. And the more unwilling they are that you should examine what we and they say, the more reason do they give you to resolve that you will do so.

I have shewn how greatly different the case of the true English protestant is from that of the papist on the one hand, and that of the separatist on the other. And though the difference be so very notorious as it is, yet we know the popish priests have represented our reformation under such colours, as to make it look like fanaticism, and the dissenters are made to believe on the other hand that our reformation is but a better sort of popery. And some little popular things are said on both sides to make these pretences look like truth. But now I have brought these colours into the light; and if you will but take upon yourselves to use your own eyes, you may, I think, easily discern that you have been all this while abused. At least I have given you reason enough to make further inquiries, and to consider more particular questions. But if upon reading this general discourse you should resolve to keep where you are, and to trouble yourselves no further, I am confident the true reason thereof must be this, that you are afraid to proceed, lest you should be convinced: and this is nothing less than wilfully to bar up your minds against the knowledge of the truth. For though I have no conceit of this performance, as if I had done any great matter in it, yet I am conscious to myself that I intended honestly all along; and I am sure I have written plainly, and have laid some things together that may give just occasion to any well-meaning papist or sectary to question the safety of the way he is in at present, especially if he has never troubled himself to consider these things before.

And now I do heartily desire you all—for I cannot desire this too often or too earnestly—that you would take the word of God for your rule, and propound the rewards of another life for your end, and set the fear of God before your eyes, whilst you consider and examine these things. It is our concern for the safety of your souls, as well as for the welfare of this poor church, so distressed with adversaries on both sides, that putteth us forward upon all occasions to lay these things before you. Do not therefore read these books, which are indeed published for your sakes, as if they were written against you. There is not one of us, I am confident, but is troubled to see you expose yourselves to the penalties of the laws of the land that are against you; but we are more sorry to con-

sider, that at the same time you do also incur the high displeasure of God. We would fain have you to avoid both the one and the other. And if you would hearken to us, the worst you would get by it is to live with less disturbance in this world; but whether that should prove true or not, you would walk in a more safe and plain way to heaven, than that which any of you are in at present. And I hope you will not grudge that good which this church should receive by your return to us, when you would do yourselves so much more by it.

If therefore you think our importunity troublesome, pray remember what it is that makes us importunate; and let no misconstruction of the design of your friends render their honest endeavours ineffectual to your conviction. We would have you understand the truth, and do your duty; and as this end is charitable, so you must needs grant those means to be charitable also by which we are contributing towards it. It is indeed our concern that these means should take place; but it is yours something more, if you are under great and dangerous mistakes, as I am persuaded you are. But if you should be so prejudiced against us, as to think that we write these controversies more in concern for the temporal interests of this church than for your spiritual good, pray will you make this profitable use of that hard thought, as to excel us in this matter, by being more careful not to mix any carnal and worldly affection with your judgment in reading these things, than you imagine us to be in writing of them. Be as strict as you will in examining what we say in behalf of our church; only be willing that truth should overcome; and consider that if that prevails against your errors, you indeed are the conquerors, and that the greatest gain will be yours, both in this world and the world to come.

I have no mind to prejudge which party it is that we may hope to win more off to the truth than of the other, being very willing to believe that there is no cause of despairing to do good on either side.

As for the dissenters, methinks it should not be hard to dissuade the most of them from breaking the communion of that church any longer, with which they agree in the substance of faith and worship, and from differing with authority for the future about things indifferent. The cause of the separa-

tion, as it is managed by themselves, is so very slight, that one would hope they should be of themselves something afraid to venture their being schismatics upon it, and consequently that they should be ready to consider what has been said to shew that there is indeed no just cause given them to separate from our church; and that there is no reason to call any thing popery which they dislike in our communion, as some of them have done, to the great disadvantage of the protestant religion; since as much as in them lay, they have made the world believe that the cause of popery is better than it is; and that it doth not consist only of opinions and practices that cannot be defended, but of some also that may. And it is not the least kindness that the indiscreet zeal of some protestants hath done to the church of Rome, that they have inveighed against some things which may be easily justified, as if they also were popish corruptions. And the learned men of that church have not been behindhand in making use of this advantage, and that by straining their utmost wit, to represent the protestant religion under such colours, as if it stood in opposition to episcopacy and liturgy, and to all ecclesiastical canons and constitutions. And I am persuaded the dissenters cannot do the protestant religion a greater kindness, than by forbearing to give them this occasion for the future. For let a cause be never so good in itself, it is never likely to thrive in their hands, who instead of pressing their adversaries with what they can never maintain, are still forward to deny what they are well able to prove.

As for the papists amongst us, their mistakes in faith and worship are so gross and foul, that if they would give themselves a little time to consider what has been, and what may further be said to convince them, I do not doubt but all of them that are endued with a competent understanding, and an honest sense of things, would soon feel those palpable errors, into the belief and practice of which they have been hitherto deluded, by an unreasonable deference to the authority of the church of Rome, and no longer stand off from the communion of the church of England. The bigger any fault is, one would think it should be more easily spied. Now these men separate from us, merely because we have abandoned those wicked doctrines and practices, which are of themselves a most neces-

sary cause of separation from any church in the world that should impose them: and therefore they of all men are the most notorious schismatics that can be imagined. And I beseech God to open their eyes to see it, and to recover into the "way of truth all such as have erred and are deceived;" that those who have hitherto been obstinate, may *prove all things;* and that those who can be persuaded to consider these things may *hold fast that which is good* [k].

[l] *And the God of patience and consolation grant us to be likeminded one towards another according to Christ Jesus: that we may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus.* Amen.

[k] 1 Thess. v. 21. [l] Rom. xv. 5, 6.

THE END.

January, 1879.

Clarendon Press, Oxford.

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